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# **MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN NEPAL: THE RHETORIC AND THE REALITY**

S M Walsh

PhD

2017

# **MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN NEPAL: THE RHETORIC AND THE REALITY**

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A thesis submitted in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements of the  
University of Northumbria at  
Newcastle for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy

Research undertaken in the Faculty  
of Engineering and Environment

June 2017

## Abstract

To address the growing frequency and intensity of disasters a global effort is underway to change the dominant approach to disaster policy from disaster response to integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) throughout development activities. Research into how DRR policy progresses in a government context is lacking. Using a qualitative case-study approach this research examines how the global policy prescription of *mainstreaming disaster risk reduction* (DRR) is unfolding within the Government of Nepal. In particular, this research a) challenges the rhetoric of substantive policy change that underpins the concept of *mainstreaming* and b) questions its efficacy as a neoliberal post-New Public Management policy tool given that the disaster vulnerability literature implicates neoliberalism as a driver of disaster risk. Finding change to be the dominant theme throughout the research, it applies theories and frameworks from the policy paradigm change literatures (e.g. Advocacy Coalition Framework, social learning and paradigm policy change) to explain what was found in the Nepal case-study. Eight months of fieldwork took place throughout 2014-2016. In total, eighty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted with bureaucrats and political party members at the central, district, and local levels. This research advances the disaster vulnerability scholarship through its critique of neoliberal policy discourse and its application of policy change literature.

It is argued that the concept of mainstreaming fits the criteria of a neoliberal buzzword; the findings of this research demonstrate why this is problematic. The lead ministry responsible for disaster management appropriated the global policy rhetoric of *mainstreaming DRR* in order to minimize any substantive policy change that the DRR agenda promotes. Despite this, evidence is also found of a growing awareness and advocacy of DRR within the Government of Nepal. This is suggestive of an advocacy coalition starting to develop, which is being built through social learning. The role of individual bureaucrats and political party members, rather than a centralised legalistic approach, is found to be fundamental to changing the disaster response policy paradigm. This research calls attention to the need to critically analyse how top-down global DRR policy prescriptions are interpreted by nation-states. Empty and hollow global policy buzzwords are easily translated into a rhetoric that does not match with the reality of the governing and the policy environment.

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

ACF-	Advocacy Coalition Framework
CDO-	Chief District Officer
CC-	Climate Change
CCA-	Climate Change Adaptation
CRED-	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
DDC-	District Development Committee
DM-	Disaster Management
DRM-	Disaster Risk Management
DRR-	Disaster Risk Reduction
EO-	Executive Officer
EPI-	Environmental Policy Integration
EFLG-	Environment Friendly Local Governance
EU-	European Union
GDP-	Gross Domestic Product
GON-	Government of Nepal
HEPI-	Horizontal Environmental Policy Integration
HFA-	Hyogo Framework for Action
HDI-	Human Development Index
IFRC-	International Federation of Red Cross/Crescent
LDO-	Local Development Officer
LDRMP-	Local Disaster Risk Management Plan
LSGA-	Local Self Governance Act
LSMC-	Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City
MOAD-	Ministry of Agricultural Development
MOE-	Ministry of Education
MOFALD-	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MOHA-	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOTSE-	Ministry of Technology Science and Environment
MOWCSD-	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Development
NASC-	Nepal Administrative Staff College
NDMA-	National Disaster Management Authority
NGO-	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC-	National Planning Commission

NPM- New Public Management  
NRRC- Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium  
NSDRM- National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management  
NSET- National Society for Earthquake Technology  
SFDRR- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction  
UK- United Kingdom  
UN- United Nations  
UNISDR- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction  
US- United States  
USD- United States Dollar  
VDC- Village Development Committee  
VEPI- Vertical Environmental Policy Integration

## Acknowledgments

This work would not have been possible if not for the contributions of many. I am grateful to Northumbria University for the studentship funding I received. I am also grateful for the strong supervisory support at Northumbria. My heartfelt thanks go to my primary supervisor, Dr. Sam Jones, for her guidance and mentorship. The supervisor-PhD student relationship is unique and I feel very privileged to have been mentored by such a skilled researcher and gifted teacher. I also wish to acknowledge the support and advice provided by my second supervisor, Prof. Andrew Collins. My thanks go to the staff (past and present) of the MSc Disaster Management and Sustainable Development Programme for their continued guidance, humour, and support: Dr. Geoff O'Brien, Dr. Janaka Jayawickrama, Prof. Maureen Fordham, Dr. Bernard Manyena, and Richard Kotter. Special thanks go to Prof. Phil O'Keefe for his encouragement and careful reading of an early draft of this work.

I could not have produced this work without the participation of many respondents. I was acutely aware during fieldwork of what a selfish pursuit a PhD is and yet people always went above and beyond to help. I wish to acknowledge the many respondents who gave up their time to help inform this work. I want to thank NSET-Nepal (especially Gopi Basyal) for their support in providing research space and logistical support while I was working in Nepal. It was an honour to be affiliated with such a progressive and renowned earthquake safety NGO. Finally, this work would not have been possible if not for my research assistants. I wish to thank Bishesh Gautam and especially Dipendra Sapkota who completed the bulk of the translation and transcription, and who became a great life-long friend.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the help and support that came from my friends and family both in Canada and Iran. Thank you to my former Brandon University lecturers, Jack Lindsay and Dr. Elaine Enarson, for their continued support and encouragement. I want to thank Jeremy, Vicky, and Leo for being wonderful friends and "my home away from home" in Newcastle. And to my husband, Aidin Meghdadpour. I would not have wanted to complete this work without your support, love, and encouragement cheering me to the end.

Thank you!

## Dedication

*I wish to dedicate this work to my early career mentor,  
Ret. Fire Chief Doug Angrove  
of the  
Victoria Fire Department (British Columbia Canada),  
who passed away May 12, 2017.*

## **Declaration**

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

Any ethical clearance for research presented in this thesis has been approved. Approval has been sought and granted by the Ethics Committee on May 13, 2014.

I declare that the word count of this thesis is 82,396words.

Name:

Signature:

Date:



# 1 Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction Policy in Nepal

---

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Midday on April 25th, 2015 Nepal experienced the M 7.6 Gorkha earthquake. Nearly 3.5 million people were impacted and almost 9000 people died. A large aftershock (M 7.2) on May 12, 2015 resulted in further death and destruction. These were not unexpected events. Earthquakes had occurred within recent memory and there was a general awareness that Nepal was overdue for a damaging one. In 2009, the Government of Nepal (GON) had endorsed mainstreaming disaster risk reduction (DRR) in its National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (NSDRM) and there were some efforts to institutionalise DRR within the central government. What became glaringly evident in the aftermath of the earthquake was that the work occurring was too little and too late. The earthquake occurred mid-way through the research period of this thesis; six months of fieldwork had concluded two weeks prior to the earthquake. The earthquake became a distressing affirmation of the need to critically interrogate the rhetoric behind global disaster policy prescriptions such as mainstreaming DRR and provided further legitimacy for the research topic under exploration.

This introductory chapter provides a brief overview of the topic areas under examination and the research objectives that are investigated in the subsequent chapters. This chapter begins with a discussion of the research context and

rationale and then continues with a discussion of global processes that are fostering the disaster risk reduction agenda. The chapter concludes with a statement of the research objectives and questions that guided the research process and the structure of the chapters that follow.

## 1.2 Research Context and Rationale

As the frequency and magnitude of disasters continues to rise globally, the imperative to find appropriate policy solutions is paramount. Since the weak government capacity in many developing states limits their ability to implement strategies to mitigate against disasters, supranational organisations like the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank Group fill the void and set the policy agenda. In general, there is a lack of critical analysis of global policy prescription substance and content.

To address this gap, this thesis examines mainstreaming DRR in the context of the Government of Nepal. Both components (i.e. mainstreaming + disaster risk reduction), originate from global development agendas and frameworks such as the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). *Mainstreaming* is a practitioner term that denotes bringing a fringe policy idea into everyday practice. *Disaster risk reduction* is a relatively new policy agenda that aims to minimize development (e.g. social, economic, built environment) losses from disasters. DRR is a recognition that disaster risk can either be intensified or reduced through development processes. It realigns focus away from disaster response and relief, which governments have used to managed the policy problem of disasters for decades. Thus, *mainstreaming DRR* is an attempt to bring the fringe policy agenda of DRR into the fold of everyday practice. Not only is it a significant change of policy direction, but because of the developmental nature of DRR, it also widens the number of stakeholders who need to take ownership of DRR.

This drive for policy change is complicated by the weak and fragile status of the government. In Nepal, it is not just tectonic faults that create risk. As a least developed country, twenty-five per cent of the population live below the national poverty line (Asian Development Bank 2016 a: Online). There exists a complex web of economic, social, and political fault lines that, notwithstanding language barriers, are difficult as an outsider to fully comprehend. Caste and gender

inequality make daily life difficult for a majority of Nepali people. The origins of many of these fault lines are centuries old and are so deeply embedded in the fabric of modern culture that they cannot be easily changed. Everything in Nepal, including the bureaucracy, is wrapped up in a highly politicized and unstable political culture. The only assured thing to change empirically is the Government. In the three and a half years that this research spans there have been four prime ministers and subsequent changes of government. Only one of those prime ministers was directly elected. The majority of political change has occurred in the intervening election period and involved a great deal of political manoeuvring and bickering between political parties. This occurs at the expense of addressing fundamental development issues.

This thesis is a study of how the global policy prescription of mainstreaming DRR plays out in Nepal's complex governing environment. While the Government of Nepal (GON) has endorsed a strategy of mainstreaming DRR in 2009, the 2015 earthquake impact and the government's response to it, suggests something is very problematic in its implementation. As Handmer and Dovers write "public policies are positions taken and communicated by governments, in more or less detail— 'avowals of intent' that recognise a problem and state what will be done about it" (Handmer and Dovers 2013: 39). This thesis interrogates both the global policy prescription of mainstreaming DRR and its subsequent endorsement by the GON.

### **1.3 Disaster Risk Reduction: A Global Policy Prescription**

This discussion now turns to look at the genesis of disaster risk reduction as a global policy prescription.<sup>1</sup> Particular emphasis is placed on the origins of DRR as a UN policy prescription because it is through the UN Hyogo Framework for Action that the GON adopted mainstreaming DRR as a policy choice. Along with

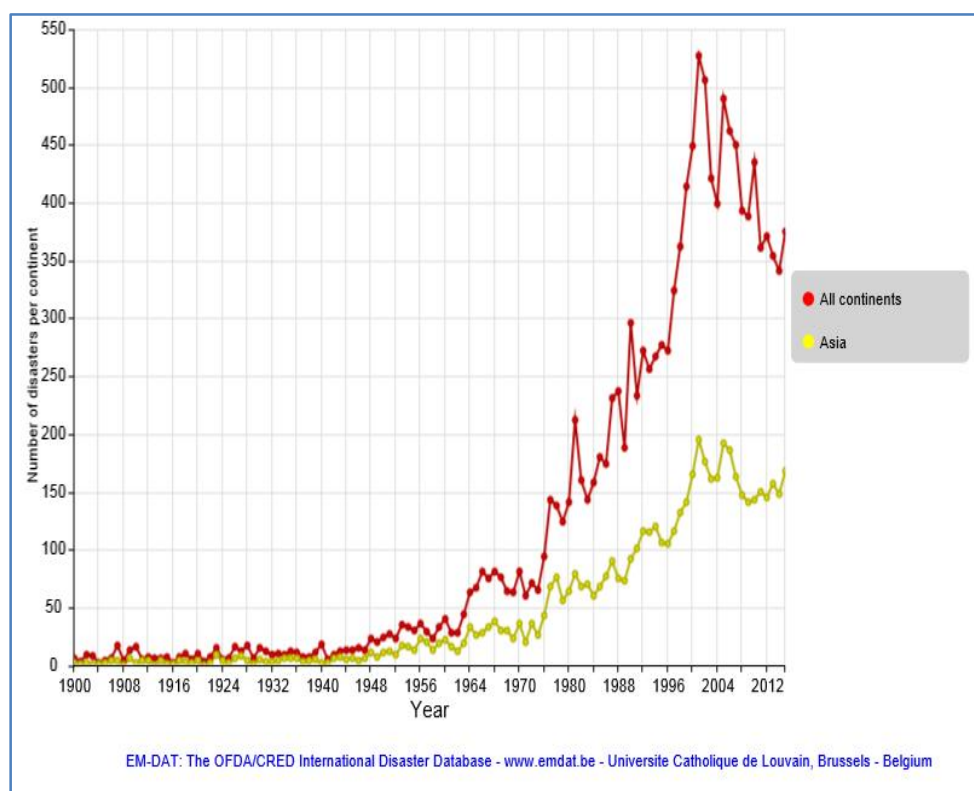
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<sup>1</sup> This discussion privileges the global DRR agenda to the exclusion of local heterogeneities, to accomplish a broader critique of the agenda. What must not be forgotten is that disaster risk reduction strategies have been employed by communities long before the establishment of the United Nations or the development of the term DRR. There is a small body of literature that highlights the local strategies used long before Bretton Woods institutions came into being (see Tran et al. 2009; Mercer et al. 2010; Kelman et al. 2012). However, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, it was not local knowledge that has stimulated DRR adoption in Nepal. Rather, it has largely been driven through the influence of donor agendas and financing.

the UN, DRR is widely endorsed by many organisations (e.g. IFRC 2013; LaTrobe et al. 2005 (Tearfund); Oxfam 2015). This discussion also contextualizes the drivers of DRR policy to understand how embedded DRR is in the global economic milieu and its implications for unique systems of governance such as found in Nepal.

DRR grew from a growing body of disaster literature that reframed disasters not solely as a hazard induced event, but as a developmental social process that caused some people to be more at-risk than others (the disaster vulnerability literature is discussed in Chapter 3). DRR also grew from the growing evidence that disasters are increasing in both frequency and magnitude and thus required new ways of dealing with disasters. The Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) began collecting data in 1988 for its Emergency Events Database EM-DAT (CRED 2016 Online). Figure 1-1 was generated from EM-DAT and illustrates the rise in the number of disasters (not severity or magnitude) for all continents and for comparison Asia alone. The number of disaster events has increased since the early 1980s.

*Figure 1-1: EM-DAT Number of Disasters Worldwide 1900-2012*



In pure economic terms disasters are costly events that wipe out development gains. In 2015, the total losses (insured/uninsured) from all disasters was ninety-two billion USD (of which only thirty-seven billion was insured loss) (SwissRe 2016: Online). Total losses from the 2015 Nepal earthquake are estimated to be ten billion USD, over half of Nepal's nineteen billion USD economy (Al Jazeera 2016: Online). Nepal's GDP fell from 5.7% in 2014 to 2.3% in 2015 (Asian Development Bank 2016b: Online). While the earthquake was not the only factor in this drop, it did precipitate confounding events—such as the rushed signing of a constitution that sparked protest and a 135 day Nepal-India border blockade. In less developed countries, like Nepal, the social and economic consequences of disaster have impacts on education, health and livelihood strategies that can last for generations. For instance, over thirty-five thousand classrooms were destroyed in Nepal by the 2015 earthquake and aftershocks (UNICEF 2016: Online).

It is highly questionable if current levels of funding for humanitarian aid is sustainable (Kellett and Sparks 2012: 1). Even in the United States, disaster response budgets are being strained. A Centre for American Progress report found that the US federal government spent \$136 billion USD on disaster response between the years 2011-2013 (Weiss and Weidman 2013). The same report warns that government expenditure on domestic response and relief is forecasted to increase because of climate change.

This trend brings us to the disaster risk reduction agenda. DRR is defined as:

“The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events” (UNISDR 2009: Online).

Although this is considered an authoritative definition, it raises more questions than it answers, which begins to hint at the complexity of DRR policy. For example, what sort of “systematic effort” is required to achieve DRR? Within an organisation who is responsible for the analysis and management of disaster causal factors? Although not stated explicitly in this definition, it is widely understood that DRR links development processes and disaster management (Collins 2009; Bradshaw 2013; Yasuyuki et al. 2017). It transforms the traditional disaster management agenda by broadening its scope to all relevant actors with a development agenda. Traditional disaster management institutions in this

definition are hard to distinguish. In effect, DRR overrides established disaster management institutions, thereby creating a policy agenda with no institutional mechanisms for implementation compelling governments to draft new legislation and policies to deliver DRR. Chapter 2 will discuss this in more detail.

### **1.3.1 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

The main UN body designated to promote DRR is the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). Throughout the 1970s the UN was mainly focused on disaster relief; it established the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator in 1979 (UNISDR 2016 a). However, the increasing magnitude and severity of disasters (see Figure 1-1) prompted many in the humanitarian response field to reconsider this approach.

In response, the United Nations declared the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and in 1994 hosted the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Yokohama Japan. This produced the *Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action* (UNISDR 1994). The Yokohama Strategy affirmed that “each country has the sovereign responsibility to protect citizens from natural disasters”, stated that “disaster prevention is better than disaster response” (UNISDR 1994: 9), and linked economic processes with increased disaster vulnerability “some patterns of consumption, production and development have the potential for increasing the vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly of the poor and socially disadvantaged groups” (ibid: 9).

This led to the establishment in 2000 of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), an “inter-agency task force and inter-agency-secretariat for disaster reduction” (UNISDR 2016a: Online). It aims to promote “a major shift from the traditional emphasis on disaster response to disaster reduction, and in effect seeks to promote ‘a culture of prevention’” (ibid: Online). In 2005, another World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held in Kobe Japan. The results of the Yokohama Strategy were discussed and became the foundation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)* (2005-2015). The HFA is recognised as the first international framework for DRR and encompassed five priority areas. It was a non-binding agreement signed by 168 nation-states, including Nepal. It expired in 2015 and was replaced by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

The UN is firmly entrenched in the global economic and political order (Frezzo 2010). It is unlikely that any policy to come from the UN would challenge established economic norms. To this end, DRR can be viewed as a policy that does not attempt to reform the dominant economic order. Its clear pro-development agenda is an indicator of this, which stipulates development can continue if it is tempered by a “systematic effort” (UNISDR Terminology 2009) to analyse and manage disaster vulnerability causal factors.

## **1.4 Research Objectives and Questions**

This research examines the mainstreaming DRR agenda in Nepal with a view to better understand how global disaster policy prescriptions are incorporated in complex governing environs. There is a widespread global acceptance and adoption of the disaster risk reduction agenda. However, there are very few critical studies that situate DRR and its resulting policy prescriptions such as mainstreaming in its neoliberal context. This is perplexing because Middleton and O’Keefe (1998) and Wisner et al. (2004) clearly link political and economic systems as the root cause of disaster vulnerability. It follows then that the extent to which political and economic systems create and shape disaster policy ought to be scrutinized and critically challenged. The objectives of this thesis are:

- To critically interrogate the concept of mainstreaming DRR and the drivers behind its promotion as a disaster policy prescription.
- To examine the rhetoric and reality of mainstreaming DRR throughout all levels of government in Nepal.

To achieve this, the following research questions are answered by this thesis:

1. Is mainstreaming DRR at the central government level merely rhetoric or does it serve as a substantive policy agenda for change?
2. What is enabling or preventing DRR policy change from occurring at the district and local levels?
3. To what extent are the political parties in Nepal acting as policy brokers for DRR?
4. Did the actors within the disaster policy subsystem in Nepal capitalize on the ‘window of opportunity’ created by the 2015 earthquake as an opportunity to change the disaster management policy paradigm towards that of DRR?

To address these questions, eight months of qualitative fieldwork was carried out in Nepal. In total eighty-eight in depth interviews were carried out with

government staff and politicians at the central, district and local levels. The main research sites included a variety of different central ministry offices in Kathmandu, in the District Development Offices and various Village Development Committee (VDC) Offices in Lalitpur, Bardiya, and Solukhumbu districts, and at the local government levels in Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City and in Gulariya Municipality, Bardiya District.

## **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

Following this introduction, this thesis begins (Chapter 2) by broadly examining the origins of both mainstreaming and DRR. Chapter 3 then establishes the theoretical frameworks that were chosen to structure this research including disaster vulnerability and policy paradigm change. The literature review chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) are not only an overview of the dominant literature in the field, but also serve to structure a critique of the policy prescription of mainstreaming to address the first objective set out for this research. Since very little theoretical or conceptual literature on mainstreaming or DRR policy exists, it was necessary to use the literature review chapters for this purpose.

Chapter 4 is an examination of Nepal. It presents an overview of the challenges—focusing on Nepal’s politics and government—that create a significant resistance to policy paradigm change. Chapter 5 is a detailed overview of the research methodology used to produce this work. This research then delves into the empirical findings generated from eight months of fieldwork. Chapter 6 focuses on whether mainstreaming DRR was rhetoric or stimulus for central government action. Chapter 7 explores the reality of the mainstreaming DRR agenda at the district and local levels. Finally, Chapter 8 explores the DRR agenda within the political parties. Chapter 9 concludes with a discussion of the main findings and implications that come from this research.



## **2 Mainstreaming DRR: A Policy Tool for Change?**

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the development of both disaster risk reduction and mainstreaming policy. Instead of viewing mainstreaming DRR as a singular and fused process (e.g. “mainstreaming DRR”), this chapter breaks each component apart (e.g. “mainstreaming” + “DRR”) and examines DRR and mainstreaming as two distinct processes. In doing so, it uncovers some significant challenges and unmet tensions that exist within each, which may prove to be a barrier to mainstreaming DRR in Nepal when examined in later chapters.

The first topic under exploration in this chapter is the evolution of DRR as a policy alternative to the dominant disaster response focused policies that exist globally. It then examines mainstreaming as a solution proposed for changing the disaster policy environment. This chapter ends with a look at the existing literature related to mainstreaming gender and environment and concludes with an overview of the existing literature related to mainstreaming DRR.

### **2.2 Civil Defence to Disaster Risk Reduction: Tensions and Unmet Challenges in Changing Disaster Policy**

This section surveys both the development of the dominant global policy approach of disaster response/relief and the promotion of DRR as an alternative policy option. It ought to be stressed that the focus of this discussion is on

modern/contemporary disaster management institutions that have arisen since the end of the Second World War. It begins with a brief look at global disaster response policy in the developing world and then examines its recent origins in the US, Europe, and other western nation-states. It concludes with a discussion of DRR and the implications of the proposed legislative and policy reforms on existing disaster management organisations.

### **2.2.1 Response/Relief Disaster Policy in the Developing World**

As mentioned in the introduction, many developing nations have weak mechanisms to adequately respond in times of disaster and so rely on the support and policy innovations of supranational bodies such as the UN and World Bank. The limited disaster response capacity is typically augmented with an influx of international humanitarian organisations during times of disaster. This relief approach has become an industry unto itself that has come under increasing scrutiny (Elliott and Sullivan 2015). In 2014, total international humanitarian assistance amounted to 24 billion USD, of which “only 0.2% went directly to local and national NGOs and 3.1% to the governments of the affected states” (Development Initiatives 2015: Online). The problems facing the humanitarian sector are summarised in a 2016 Overseas Development Institute report:

“...the formal humanitarian sector is suffering a crisis of legitimacy.... Efforts to recapture this legitimacy have focused on improving the mechanics of response and the system already in place, rather than tackling more fundamental assumptions, power dynamics and incentives. Despite a decade of system-wide reforms, the sector still falls short in the world’s most enduring crisis responses, and perceptions of humanitarian work in recent crises suggest that the formal, Western ‘system’ is not doing a good job in the eyes of the people it aims to help” (Bennett 2016: 68).

Substantial reform of this approach is clearly needed and yet as stated, change over the last decade has been slow to occur, which is attributable to a failure to address underlying issues related to “assumptions, power dynamics, and incentives” (ibid: 68). Another factor that needs consideration is that the ‘western’ system of humanitarian relief has, as Cohen and Werker (2008) argue, increased the likelihood that recipient countries will underinvest in domestic government preparedness and response activities.

It is impossible and unwise to generalise all developing world contexts, but even with the global response/relief infrastructure efforts have been made within

developing nation-states to institutionalise disaster response capabilities. In the case of Nepal, which is categorized as a least developed country by the UN (UN Committee for Development Policy 2016) and was the recipient of 4.1 billion USD in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes (MacAskill and Sharma 2015), efforts have been made since 1982 through the *Natural Calamity Relief Act* (GON 1982) to institutionalised disaster management within the central government. This centralised disaster management relies on using military and paramilitary resources to respond to disasters and is studied in greater detail in Chapter 6.

### **2.2.2 History of Disaster Response in Developed World: Air Raid Precaution Volunteers during the Second World War**

This discussion next examines the evolution of disaster response policy in the developed world. The origin of government institutions that are used to respond in times of disaster in North America and western Europe begins in the Second World War. Given the risk of German bombing and the escalation of tensions, the Home Office of the United Kingdom passed legislation in 1938 that compelled local authorities to recruit and train brigades for air-raids (Maartens 2015). These voluntary brigades encompassed volunteer ambulance drivers, decontamination units, first aid, and firefighting. They were an attempt to create a “citizen army” (Maartens 2015) through mobilizing community action and augmenting national defence capabilities for the impending war effort (Phillips et al. 2012). In the UK, an estimated 400,000 air raid precaution volunteers were mobilized (Maartens 2015). Six months after joining the war in 1941, the US established a similar home front, coordinated by the newly established Office of Civilian Defence (Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History Online). These voluntary brigades adopted a military ethos and organisation of top-down command and control. This era represents the first time that government organisations were established to carry out protective duties for citizens outside of the existing military, police, ambulance, and fire brigades and are widely regarded as the precursor of disaster management organisations (Quarantelli 2000).

In the aftermath of the Second World War, there was little doubt that military defence was a public good that ought to be provided by the state (Sandler and Cauley 1975). This state interventionist thinking (coinciding with Keynesian

economics discussed below) extended to public protection in times of emergency and disaster (Handmer and Dovers 2007). For instance, the belief in post-war France was that “being the owner of most of the infrastructures and services for energy, communication and transports, the state also had the responsibility for providing these vital needs to the population, in normal times as in times of crisis” (Bourcart 2015: 40).

### **2.2.3 The Cold War and Civil Defence**

Shortly after the Second World War ended, a new enemy arose that led to the institutionalization of government departments responsible for civil protection during the Cold War. The languishing volunteer brigades of WWII were revived through legislation, increased funding, and the hiring of staff (Coppola 2007). Local volunteer brigades were repurposed for large scale evacuation of citizens in the event of a nuclear bomb attack. Philipps et al. (2012) suggests that in the US the ideal candidate for a local government civil defence job at this time was a retired military member. Since they were already receiving a military pension, it allowed local governments to keep salaries low and the jobs part-time. In addition, previous military experience, it was assumed, would result in better management during times of crisis (Philipps et. al. 2012).

A more cynical analysis for the hiring of mostly part-time personnel is that local civil defence institutions were never intended to protect the public from nuclear events. The absurdity of volunteer brigades and part-time staff responding to the aftermath of a nuclear attack was not lost on senior policy makers at the time (Knowles 2007; Smith 2010). Smith (2010) argues that UK civil defence was a ruse to maintain public support for its Cold War deterrence strategies:

“The debate centred around two opposing views of the role of civil defence: civil defence as an ‘insurance policy’ to protect the civilian population in the event of an attack, serving much the same purpose as it had during the Second World War, and civil defence as part of the strategy of deterrence, a strategy upon which Britain had become increasingly reliant since deciding to build its own hydrogen weapons. In the latter view, civil defence was a way of deterring attack by convincing the enemy that Britain was prepared to fight, and a method of maintaining public support for the deterrent by convincing the British people that nuclear war was survivable” (Smith 2010:158).

The UK Home Office issued pamphlets to the public with advice on how to survive nuclear fall-out in order to maintain the pretext that nuclear fallout was survivable. One such pamphlet read:

“Radioactive dust on the body could be washed off with soap and water, particular attention being given to the nails and hair... If a washing machine were used for clothes, some of the radioactive particles might stay inside the machine. A bucket or tub would be better” (Her Majesty’s Stationery Office 1957 from Smith 2010: 149).

Historian Eric Singer (2015) argues that civil defence (from 1957-1964) in the US transformed from a “pro-urban” policy that focused on community preservation after an attack to an “anti-urban” policy that promoted a quasi-militarised state. His case study of Baltimore US, highlights that by the 1960s civil defence in the US “became fused with law enforcement and urban social control” (Singer 2015: 549). This alienated prominent advocates of the earlier “pro-urban” approach and ultimately led to the demise of civil defence in Baltimore. Similarly, Knowles (2007) discusses the failure of early civil (1951-1960s) defence policies in another US city, Philadelphia.

“Command and control was seen to be the way to react to a war, despite the fact that the citizens of Philadelphia did not see themselves at war. This imposition of a wartime command structure on a vibrant, living, peacetime city was a policy misstep that led to the dissolution of civil defence” (Knowles 2007: 229).

The problem of civil defence policies is well documented in the history literature<sup>2</sup>. However, disaster and emergency scholars often gloss over the civil defence era, merely attributing it as the root of modern disaster government institutions (Phillips et al. 2012). While this is true, historical accounts emphasize civil defence’s unsettling use as a tool for advancing central government defence policies and for adopting a culture that was clearly out of sync with post-war public opinion. In the UK, civil defence was used as a policy instrument in support of the government’s deterrence policy by building a case that nuclear war was survivable. In the US, it was used to reinforce national nuclear arms policy through manipulating public perceptions of the risk and by manufacturing fear. From these flawed institutions arose the next generation of emergency and disaster management. However, as discussed below its problematic history as civil defence has never really been reconciled.

#### **2.2.4 Civil Defence 2.0: Emergency and Disaster Management**

The increasing unlikelihood of nuclear fallout, the public distrust of civil defence, and the eventual end of the Cold War necessitated that these organisations

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<sup>2</sup> e.g. for Canadian discussion see Burtch 2012; for West German discussion see Biess 2009.

begin to transform themselves (Handmer and Dovers 2013). The legacy of civil defence on what became disaster and emergency management (herein referred to as *disaster management*) cannot be overstated<sup>3</sup>. The civil defence legal frameworks “remained in place and formed the basis for modern disaster and emergency management as we know it today” (Coppola 2007: 5). The institutions in place during the civil defence era to ‘combat’ nuclear attack was systematically transformed to ‘manage’ hazards. The term disaster management<sup>4</sup> was adopted. Although the terminology was more suited for a civilian government atmosphere, the ethos of command and control for disaster management still echoed that of the civil defence era (Neal and Phillips 1995). Emergency management remained focused on disaster response and maintained a hiring bias for experienced first responders<sup>5</sup>.

Military/security concerns continue to influence and define disaster management. Particularly in the US after 9/11, disaster management organisations were brought back into the defence fold of national policy<sup>6</sup> (Roberts 2006; Cigler 2009). The implications of this leads to what Tierney (2007) calls “‘stovepiping’, or the tendency for organisations and agencies to closely guard information, carry out their own specialized activities in isolation from one another, and to resist cross-agency collaboration” (Tierney 2007: 411). That disaster management institutions are quickly appropriated for security and defence remains a unique and somewhat troubling feature of disaster management institutions.

In both the developed and developing world contexts there are strong forces behind a response focused policy approach to disasters.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, many government organisations have retained the title of civil defence. For example, New Zealand’s central government ministry for disaster is called the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management and Ireland refers to it as Civil Defence Ireland.

<sup>4</sup> Also known as civil protection (European Union), emergency management (US and Canada), and resilience (UK)

<sup>5</sup> These trends are starting to shift, particularly in the developed world, with an increased focus on professionalization within the field and more academic routes for entering the profession outside of the traditional first response routes (Oyola-Yemaiel and Wilson 2005; Knox and Haupt 2015).

<sup>6</sup> After 9/11 FEMA lost its autonomy and was subsumed under the Department Homeland Security to decrease silos within the intelligence and response federal agencies. Instead, it pushed emergency management planning off the agenda and ultimately led to the catastrophic failure of Hurricane Katrina (Lucus-McEwen 2011).

1. There is the response/relief multimillion dollar disaster industry in place during times of disasters. One of the consequences of this is that governments do not adequately invest in domestic disaster preparedness.
2. There is also a history of disaster management being a policy instrument of central government defence initiatives. The culture of defence and security has permeated disaster management institutions.

As previously argued in the introductory chapter, maintaining a disaster response approach is no longer sustainable, especially with the increased magnitude and frequency of disasters globally. This presents a global policy conundrum for both donors and supranational organisations: how to shift disaster policy from response to one of disaster preparedness and reduction?

### **2.2.5 The Shift to Disaster Risk Reduction**

Recognizing that substantive change is required in how disasters are managed led to the promotion of disaster risk reduction. Although DRR was briefly defined in Chapter 1, a more comprehensive discussion of DRR and the related disaster risk management (DRM) is discussed here. One way to distinguish between the two terms is to categorize them as, a) DRR is the “policy objective” and b) DRM is the “implementation” (PreventionWeb 2017: Online). This is useful, because on its own DRR is too broad of a concept to be implemented.

DRR is the policy objective of identifying, anticipating, and reducing risk (PreventionWeb 2017). Having grown out of the disaster vulnerability literature (discussed in Chapter 3), the objective of DRR is to address both present-day and future risks. It is understood that existing political, social, cultural and economic factors exacerbate risks for billions of people worldwide. DRR policy must address existing risks in a “systematic way” (UNISDR 2009) that also accounts for likely future risks. For example, if a policy does not account for likely future scenarios brought about by climate change, then any development gains have the potential to be lost. Traditionally, disasters have been viewed as an outside threat to development (Global Assessment Report 2015). DRR an advancement on this understanding, i.e. poorly planned and implemented development is itself a contributor to disaster risk. To this end, because so many sectors contribute to “development”, DRR is a very broad policy objective that

must be internalised and owned by many sectors that have not traditionally been considered a part of disaster management.

Disaster risk management is a programme of implementation. It encompasses a wide range of activities that comprehensively cover each component of the disaster cycle (i.e. preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery). Accordingly, these activities involve (Global Assessment Report 2015):

1. Risk Identification
2. Mitigation
3. Transfer
4. Preparedness
5. Emergency Response
6. Rehabilitation
7. Reconstruction

That DRM is all encompassing—meaning that it includes both pre and post disaster activities—puts the policy objective of DRR at risk if the two terms are mistakenly used interchangeably. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the disaster response approach to dealing with disasters is the dominant approach. For this reason, the term DRM is used sparingly throughout this research. The focus is on the policy objective of linking development and risk reduction and thus DRR is preferred.

In 2005, with the signing of the Hyogo Framework for Action by 168 nation-states (Nepal included), DRR came into being as a non-binding framework with little to no mechanisms for implementation. To address this shortfall, Priority Action One of the HFA makes establishing supportive institutional environments a main objective. The key activities of Priority Action One are listed below in Table 2-1.



*Table 2-1. HFA Priority Action One*

Key Activity	
1.i.a	Support the creation and strengthening of national integrated disaster risk reduction mechanisms, such as multi-sectoral national platforms, with designated responsibilities at the national through to the local levels to facilitate coordination across sectors. National platforms should also facilitate coordination across sectors, including by maintaining a broad based dialogue at national and regional levels for promoting awareness among the relevant sectors.
1.i.b	Integrate risk reduction, as appropriate, into development policies and planning at all levels of government, including in poverty reduction strategies and sectors and multi-sector policies and plans.
1.i.c	Adopt, or modify where necessary, legislation to support disaster risk reduction, including regulations and mechanisms that encourage compliance and that promote incentives for undertaking risk reduction and mitigation activities.
1.i.d.	Recognise the importance and specificity of local risk patterns and trends, decentralise responsibilities and resources for disaster risk reduction to relevant sub-national or local authorities, as appropriate.

(source: UNISDR 2005).

Although the term mainstreaming is not used in Table 2-1, it is used explicitly used elsewhere in the HFA. For example, “mainstream and integrate disaster risk reduction within and across all sectors and review and promote the coherence and further development, as appropriate, of national and local frameworks of laws, regulations and public policies...” (UNISDR 2005: 14). Both the terms integration and mainstreaming are fleshed out in more detail below (sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.2).

Where and how the established disaster management organisations fit into this new policy agenda is unclear. To stimulate change, the DRR agenda appears to override existing disaster management institutions and by doing so levies a critique of their past functioning. It may be argued that this does not matter in many developing country contexts because established disaster management institutions are either weak or non-existent. However, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, even in institutions where disaster management implementation is lacking the desire to maintain the disaster response status quo is a serious barrier to change.

## **2.3 Mainstreaming Policy: A Neoliberal Tool for Change**

The rest of this chapter is focused on a global policy solution aimed at stimulating significant policy change within organisations: *mainstreaming policy*. This section outlines the evolution and development of mainstreaming policy as a solution for complex policies such as DRR, situating it squarely within the dominant global economic regime, neoliberalism.

### **2.3.1 Before Neoliberalism: Keynesian and Developmental Economics**

Before discussing the current economic paradigm of neoliberalism and its relationship with policy mainstreaming, it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of what came before and what prompted the resultant shift to a neoliberal paradigm. Keynesian economic theory was the leading global tenet of the post-World War era. With memories still fresh of the Great Depression (widely believed to have been caused by *laissez-faire* economic policy), and the realities of physical and social reconstruction of war-torn Europe, the interventionist economic theories of British economist John Maynard Keynes prevailed in western capitalist nation-states. In response to the Great Depression, Keynesian economic theory advocated government spending (an interventionist strategy) rather than an austerity and savings approach of classical liberalism. As Keynes stated “[f]or the engine which drives enterprise is not thrift, but profit” (Keynes 1971).

Peet (2003) summarizes how Keynesian theory was translated into government policy during this era, “[p]ost-war liberalism used state intervention, exercised through various levels of planning and public ownership, in its social democratic versions, and fiscal and monetary policy in its liberal-democratic versions to stabilize economies and redistribute income through welfare programmes, unemployment compensation, the subsidization of education and the free provision of social services” (Peet 2003: 6). A hallmark of this period was the expansion of government bureaucracies to “promote growth and stability in the economy” (Choudhury 1994: 46).

In the developing world, Keynesian theory was translated into developmentalism, which favoured strong government involvement in the

markets mainly through import-substitution strategies. It aimed to create strong domestic markets by placing high tax on imports and subsidizing domestic industry. It was used as a political tool and strongly promoted by the US and Bretton Woods Institutions so that the transitioning economies of post-independent states would be integrated into the capitalist sphere of influence rather than communist.

However, both Keynesian and developmentalism showed signs of disintegration by the 1970s. Developing economies were under pressure from underemployment, rising inflation, balance of payment challenges, and currency overvaluation (Peck 2004). The import-substitution strategies central to developmentalism did not lead to the necessary industrial growth needed to sustain long-term economic progress, leading many developing nation-states to borrow heavily. Western capitalist economies were at the same time reeling from stagflation (slow growth, high inflation) and increased labour unrest. Oil prices rose throughout the decade ending access to cheap oil. To stop rising inflation, the US raised its interest rates, which had a cascading effect on interest rates in the developing world. Developing nations could no longer make payments on variable rate loans, causing many to default. Keynesian fiscal policy was deemed unable to solve this and the other problems in the global economy (Hartwick and Peet 2003). In fact, it was implicated as a root cause of slow economic growth, as high unemployment was triggering larger social welfare spending in the public sector.

### **2.3.2 Neoliberalism and its Epochs**

To understand how neoliberalism relates to mainstreaming policy requires a look at the evolution of neoliberalism. In the thirty plus years of neoliberalism, there are two discernible epochs that Peck and Tickell have termed “roll-back neoliberalism” and “roll-out neoliberalism” (Peck and Tickell 2002). Both are discussed below; it is in the “roll-out neoliberalism” epoch where the concept of mainstreaming evolves and becomes popularised.

Returning attention to the above mentioned economic problems of the 1970s and growing academic dissent from the likes of Friedman (1960; 1977), created the conditions for a revival of *laissez faire* economics resulting in a swift pendulum swing away from post-war Keynesian interventionism to

*neoliberalism*<sup>7</sup> in the mid-1970s. The premise of neoliberalism is that the market, when freed and unencumbered from state interference, is the best allocator of wealth distribution and generator of unfettered economic growth. Some describe neoliberalism as a form of 'hyper-capitalism' (Piven 2015).

The first epoch of neoliberalism occurred under Thatcher and Reagan in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This was an era that dogmatically followed classical liberal economic theory. In the name of reform, structural adjustment programmes became conditional to development loans granted to developing economies to 'shock' them into stimulating economic growth. These measures included selling off publically owned assets, promoting export trade and foreign direct investment, liberalising markets, reducing the size of government and drastically cutting welfare spending.

Not just a developing world phenomenon, Rhodes (1994) studying the UK public service declared the "hollowing out of the state" (Rhodes 1994: 138).

Neoliberalism had transformed British state executive power by eroding it from above (e.g. "international interdependence"), below (e.g. "marketization"), and sideways (e.g. "parastatal bodies"). This era of "roll-back neoliberalism" was "preoccupied with the active destruction" (Peck and Tickell 2002: 384) of the vestiges of Keynesian state apparatus. The "hollowing-out" of government created voids in service provision that were filled with both private and non-governmental organisations. What is important to note here is that government bureaucracies were greatly reduced and severely fragmented (Rhodes 1994).

By the 1990s, it was evident that the neoliberal agenda, especially concerning structural adjustment, was in fact increasing levels of poverty especially for the 'poorest of the poor' by reducing their ability to access markets (Konadu-Agyemang 2000; Leal 2007). The promised marketization of social service provision had not materialised (Schleiter and Statham 2002; Maynard et al. 2012). This and growing public dissent (e.g. the growth of the anti-globalisation

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<sup>7</sup> Neoliberalism is both a conceptual tool used for labelling a dominant global ideology [a "common sense of the times" (Peck and Tickell 2002: 381)], and an economic agenda with an arsenal of policy instruments. For the purposes of this thesis, both are relevant. As a concept, neoliberalism denotes a "shorthand to describe any logic of organisation in which the market has a significant role..." (Venugopal 2015: 172). The suite of neoliberal policy instruments includes state downsizing, deregulation, free trade, reduction of public social welfare spending, austerity, and privatization.

movement) led to Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank Group to devise a reformulated version of neoliberalism.

The second epoch of “roll-out neoliberalism” is where we find the root of policy mainstreaming. The new iteration of neoliberalism focused “on the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalised state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory restructuring...” (Peck and Tickell 2002: 384). The belief was that the first neoliberal epoch had failed because the conditions had not been right. Paradoxically, this required more state interventions in order to correct these imperfections. A “moderate and tempered” (Bayliss et al. 2011: 1) neoliberalism appeared. In order to understand why mainstreaming is associated with the “roll-out neoliberalism” it is important to now discuss neoliberalism in the public sector.

### **2.3.3 New Public Management**

The public sector underwent significant neoliberal reforms in order that it “fit the new spirit of capitalism” (Diefenbach 2009: 894). Sweeping public sector reform emerged in the late 1970s to integrate neoliberal discourse into the public-sector sphere. This slate of reforms was later termed New Public Management by Hood (1991). NPM reforms were widely disseminated globally in both developed and developing nation-states (Cohen 2016). Like neoliberalism, there are also two discernible epochs in NPM that coincided with the neoliberal shifts.

Osbourne and Gaebler (1993) argued that governments ought to be ‘steering rather than rowing’. NPM privileges market allocation of services rather than government allocation, and aims to transform the public sector using private sector management approaches. These are widely recognized in the literature to include government budget cuts, decentralisation, privatization, contracting out of services, and adopting business management practise such as performance management and incentive use, and clear separation of policy making from the administration (Gruening 2001; Cohen 2016).

The size of the bureaucracy, which in the post-war period had grown, was attacked as a grossly inefficient way of delivering services. Sarker points to three main NPM critiques of the post-war Weberian-style bureaucracy: a bias towards excessive provision of public goods because of representative

democratic political systems, state agents not having personal incentives to carry out functions efficiently, and the public sector creates spaces and opportunities for ‘rent-seeking’ behaviours (Sarker 2005: 251).

Although the spirit of NPM—to reduce waste and improve efficiencies in bureaucracies—cannot be faulted, its implementation was applied with a zealotry that decimated government services relied on most heavily by the disadvantaged (Lustig 1995). NPM adoption raises key concerns regarding local level community participation and democratic accountabilities both in developed (Davis and Geddes 2000) and developing nation-state contexts (Andrews 2007).

Another key aspect found in the first iteration of NPM—in neoliberalism’s “roll-back” epoch—is *specialisation*. It was believed specialisation of work streams would build capacity by aligning the bureaucracy “within separate, semi-autonomous organisations” (Christensen and Laegreid 2013: 556).

Specialisation is the antithesis to the sort of cross-sector integration of current mainstreaming rhetoric and is discussed in more detail below.

### **2.3.4 Post-New Public Management**

Alongside neoliberal “roll-out” reform in the 1990s, NPM also underwent a reform process to “reduce the negative impact of NPM reforms” (Andersson and Liff 2012: 836). The proponents of NPM underestimated the complexity of delivering government services (Kinder 2012). Of note, was the adverse effect of NPMs *specialisation* mentioned above. Christensen and Laegreid (2013) argue that specialisation, “led to proliferation and fragmentation of the government apparatus and reduced the capacity to handle ‘wicked issues’<sup>8</sup> that transcend organisational boundaries and administrative levels” (Christensen and Laegreid 2013: 556). The post-NPM reforms aimed to increase governmental coordination ability both horizontally and vertically within the administration. They also aimed to make government function in an age of austerity and to be

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<sup>8</sup> The use of the term ‘wicked’ is commonly found in the policy literatures- e.g. wicked issues, wicked policy, wicked problem. Here the use of wicked does not mean evil, but rather an issue that is “highly resistant to resolution” (Australian Public Service Commission 2016 Online). Candel and Biesbroek (2016) add: “...in addition to cross-scale dynamics, these problems involve high degrees of ambiguity, controversy, uncertainty, and deadlocked interaction patterns” (Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 212).

able to manage the complexity of policy issues (termed 'wicked' issues). It was acknowledged that "there was a mismatch between the problem structures and the organisation structure, so that major tasks now cut across organisational boundaries" (Christensen and Laegreid, 2013: 557). The existing siloed and departmentalised bureaucratic structures arising from specialisation (i.e. first neoliberal epoch) did not suit the management of complex wicked problems. In addition to this, Cohen (2016) adds that the post- 9/11 security environment made policy makers fearful and fostered a cultural policy climate aimed at "control, coordination, and centralisation" (Cohen 2016: 22). What evolved from post-NPM is a neo-Weberian notion of government functionality.

It is in this post-NPM era of trying to fix government fragmentalisation that policy mainstreaming rose to prominence through supranational organisations such as the World Bank and UN as a solution for national governments to better manage complex policies. Complex wicked policies such as sustainable development (the Rio Agenda 21 call for wide policy integration) and gender in 1995 (Beijing Platform for Action called for gender mainstreaming) were prescribed. Both mainstreaming and integration are discussed in detail below. However, what should be noted is that all the hallmarks of post-NPM discussed above are reflected in the current conception of mainstreaming/integration. That is, mainstreaming is a centralised top down mechanism aimed at fixing both vertical and horizontal fragmentalisation. It delegates wicked policy to many other sectors without increasing organisational capacity. It pushes national governments to do more with less.

## **2.4 Problematizing Mainstreaming Policy**

This section raises two concerns found in the literature that relate to mainstreaming policy. First, it problematizes mainstreaming's close association with neoliberal policy by discussing the evidence from the literature that neoliberalism is increasing global disaster risk. The second concern presented here argues that the term mainstreaming has evolved as a neoliberal 'buzzword' intended to reinforce neoliberal agendas. The problems associated with using a buzzword as a shorthand for a complex policy endeavour are discussed.

### 2.4.1 Disaster Risk and Neoliberalism

The literature has clearly established a link between neoliberal economic policy and increased disaster risk. To begin with, privatization of government services and critical infrastructure once under government control has transformed the disaster governance landscape. The question remains “whether governments should retain responsibility for disaster risks or whether risks should be shared between governments and markets” (Tierney 2012: 352). In the last decade, there has been a rise in the promotion of public-private-partnerships in relation to disaster management (Auzzir et al. 2014). Bourcart best summarises this change, in his work concerning France’s shift to private utility ownership:

“... successive French governments have progressively privatised these infrastructures and transformed them into large companies with specific obligations of service delivery. In the case of man-made or natural disasters, these private companies now have the duty to insure the continuity of their activity and to recover as quickly as possible, in order to maintain the satisfaction of the people’s needs. In the face of disaster, the state has lost an important part of its crisis intervention capacity, and would rather take on the role of coordinator for these different vital service providers. Civil defence is therefore moving from an issue of territorial integrity (protection of the state, public infrastructures, the citizens and their belongings, etc.) to an issue of logistics, business continuity and vital networks and infrastructure preservation” (Bourcart 2015: 40).

In the context of disaster management, the selling off of government utilities changes the level of government control in times of disaster to keep essential services running (Bourcart 2015). Additionally, Hood and Jackson (1991) argue that NPM is a ‘recipe for disaster’ as the pressure in the private sector to reduce costs puts maintenance at risk and ultimately increases the risks associated with technical hazards:

“If prospective back-up facilities are a vulnerable target for the NPM cost-cutter with eyes firmly fixed on the short-term bottom line, maintenance is another soft target, and here again private sector practice often shows the way to save money in the short term. Particularly in the poll-centred policy-making system which suppresses influence of people with experience within the bureaucratic system, maintenance activity is likely to be seen as unexciting and unproductive, yet such activity is often crucial to the safe management of hazardous technology” (Hood and Jackson 1991: 22).

Another consequence of neoliberalism on disaster institutions concerns the “hollowing out of the state” (Rhodes 1994). Prudham (2004) provides a strong empirical case linking a neoliberal policy agenda with the creation of the Walkerton Ontario e-coli contaminated water crisis in 2000. Walkerton is a small rural town located in the Canadian province of Ontario. In 1995, Ontario elected



a conservative government that implemented a slate of public sector reforms; Prudham equates these reforms with Peck and Tickell's "rollback neoliberalism" discussed earlier. He argues, "[i]n the case of Walkerton, it is precisely the combination of neoliberal reforms with a highly particular biophysical environment and the actions of environmental managers that turned a 'normal' accident waiting to happen into a specific one with tragic consequences" (Prudham 2004: 344). His analysis points to government cutbacks of oversight bodies and forced privatization of water testing combined with a lack of attendant legislation/regulations to guide oversight of the water testing as contributing factors to the disaster.

The intersection of disaster and neoliberalism is the premise of Klein's (2008) publication The Shock Doctrine. This work is important since it popularized the disaster-neoliberal connection that would have otherwise remained hidden in fringe academic literature. Klein argues that disaster events are appropriated in order to undemocratically implement 'free market' (neoliberal) policies at a time when the public is distracted by the on-going disaster response and recovery. Klein labels this as 'disaster capitalism' (Klein 2008). These policies do nothing to aid recovery processes, instead they further weaken and erode the foundations of the nation-state. For example, Klein documents the privatization of Sri Lankan beaches that occurred soon after the 2005 tsunami in order for the beaches to become a "boutique tourism destination" (ibid: 467). This forced the local fishing communities off what had previously been communal beaches. Critics of Klein's work argue that The Shock Doctrine does not fit in the academic cannon because of its oversimplification and sometimes exaggeration of the issues (Stiglitz 2007). Nonetheless, the same critic (Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz) also wrote in a New York Times Book Review that:

"...the case against these policies [the policies of 'free market fundamentalism' as he terms them] is even stronger than the one Klein makes. They were never based on solid empirical and theoretical foundations, and even as many of these policies were being pushed, academic economists were explaining the limitations of markets—for instance, whenever information is imperfect, which is to say always" (Stiglitz 2007, Online).

Perez and Cannella (2011) explore 'disaster capitalism' in relation to early childhood education centres in Louisiana in the post-Hurricane Katrina recovery environment. In keeping with Klein's work, the authors found that, "[c]hildhood public services such as education and care were dismantled and taken over by

the state of Louisiana... or by private agencies that were given corporate contracts to control resources” (Perez and Cannella 2011: 47). They argue that the commodification of early child educational services produces injustices when students are viewed as “human capital” and parents as “consumers” (Perez and Cannella 2011: 56). This leads to furthering inequalities as poorer households are unable to buy their children the best educational opportunities.

The effects of neoliberalism on mitigation and risk reduction has also been discussed. For example, one common research theme in the disaster-neoliberal nexus is to examine the effect of neoliberalism on the government regulatory environment, the knock-off effects of de-regulation on the building industry, and the construction of unsafe housing. Deregulation and non-compliance of building codes is perhaps the area where the causal effect of neoliberal policy on disaster risk is most visible. Examples of this research are discussed below.

Wisner et. al (2004) use Jamaica as a case-study to highlight the linkage between the economy as a dynamic pressure and its role in increased risk generated by unsafe building stock. In the 1980s, Jamaica’s large foreign debt prompted its government to attract foreign capital by raising interest rates. Interest rates rose to 20 per cent and “home mortgage rates ran between 14 and 25 per cent” (ibid: 78). At the same time, the government “enforced rent control and levied an import duty on construction materials” (ibid: 78). High mortgage interest rates and a cap on rental rates meant homeowners neglected to fix and maintain their properties. The high interest rates also led builders to cut corners on safety factors to gain a profit. The cumulative effect of this was damage to over 100,000 lower income homes during Hurricane Gilbert (ibid: 78). The authors suggest that:

“The experience of Jamaica during the past 20 years illustrates the linkages that exist between the global economy, national economic policies and vulnerability. The impact of ‘structural adjustment’ on vulnerability went far beyond the issue of building maintenance. Because of the high cost of finance, builders tried to keep the cost of construction as low as possible so some small profit could be made. Again, safety suffered” (Wisner et al. 2004: 79).

Neoliberalism is again implicated in increased risk by Green (2005) who points to the liberalisation of Turkey’s economy as a factor in increased earthquake fatalities due to unsafe building construction. After a coup d’état in the early 1980s, Turkey’s new Prime Minister liberalised the Turkish economy- public land was privatized and legally sold, while deregulation occurred to encourage

entrepreneurship. This resulted in a construction boom and the emergence of many construction firms. In the wake of liberalisation, corruption ‘blossomed’ (Green 2005). Green writes:

“This culture of laissez faire in which it was possible to build wherever and whatever one liked, with no adequate regulatory control, was to grow more prevalent over the next 15 years. A notable finding of the post-earthquake engineering teams was that a disproportionate number of newly built structures failed in the 1999 disasters. This finding **suggests a direct link between liberalization and deregulation strategies** employed by the Ozal regime in the 1980s and the poor-quality housing stock which flourished from that period” (Green 2005: 530; emphasis added).

Providing a much broader view of neoliberal policy and increased disaster risk, Wisner (2001) discusses the implications for El Salvador’s public administration in absorbing lessons gained from Hurricane Mitch. He speculates that El Salvador’s “dogmatic commitment to neoliberal economic principles” has negatively affected the national level state’s ability “to implement prevention and mitigation strategies” (Wisner 2001: 252). El Salvador was minimally damaged in Hurricane Mitch and yet participated fully in recovery meetings and lessons-learned activities (Wisner 2001). Wisner argues that neoliberal policy eroded the capacity of the government to absorb the lessons drawn from these activities. For instance, a key recommendation to come from Hurricane Mitch was the importance of access to primary health and hospital services in rural and poor urban areas to minimise the risks of water-borne diseases. However, the government of El Salvador was demonstrably uncommitted to public healthcare, and appeared to favour privatizing it as they did with the water supply (Wisner 2001). Additionally, he points to the neoliberal policy of decentralisation without the attendant funding or resources, as producing significant local level capacity problems in dealing with disaster risks.

#### **2.4.2 Mainstreaming as a Neoliberal ‘Buzzword’**

Considering the above, mainstreaming’s close association with neoliberal policy needs to be considered. One phenomenon of neoliberalism is the way that language, particularly “development speak” (Cornwall and Eade 2010) is tailored to reinforce the neoliberal economic agenda. Because of the influence that major global governance institutions—such as the World Bank and the UN—have in funding and setting development objectives, it is through these institutions where the language of development is either created or co-opted and

then widely disseminated (Cornwall and Eade 2010). An oft cited example of this occurrence is in the usage of the term sustainable development and/or sustainability (Scoones 2010). Elliott (2016) argues that the complex issue of climate change cannot be addressed through concepts such as sustainable development and sustainability because these terms simply reinforce the “...neoliberal conception of economic growth: it [i.e. sustainability] is a vital and core concept of neoliberalism itself” (Elliott 2016: 9).

The concept of mainstreaming evolved and was popularized through the supranational organisations discussed above. It is argued here that mainstreaming has all the markers of a neoliberal ‘buzzword’. Collins (2000) defines a buzzword as “a grammar based upon commands and imperatives [that have] been developed which will not, and cannot, countenance dissent” (Collins 2000: 386). Critical attention is deflected because buzzwords offer a “readymade view of the world” (ibid: 386).

The impact that buzzwords have on policy development is elaborated by Loughlin (2002), who writes from a health policy perspective. He argues that modern public management is constructed upon the “rhetorical force of certain words” (Loughlin 2002: 231), which in the terminology of development includes terms like ‘capacity building,’ ‘good governance’, and ‘participatory development’ (Leal 2010). Loughlin also argues that in the health sector, “policies are formed by a process that privileges rhetoric over reality” (Loughlin 2002: 231). Here is the first time that the term rhetoric<sup>9</sup> is used. As indicated by the main title of this research, rhetoric is a central and important concept. Loughlin’s concern with rhetoric undermining the reality of the policy making environment is shared by the central questions guiding this research.

Another tactic of neoliberal discourse is to co-opt existing radical development terminology with the aim of “fundamental pacification of social dissent” (Elliott 2016: 91). For example, Leal (2010) discusses how terminology that originated

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<sup>9</sup> The term rhetoric has several definitions. It is used here as a synonym of hyperbole or as Partington defines it, “Rhetoric of course has yet another sense, equivalent to ‘grandiloquence’ or the use of high-sounding language. This meaning presumably derives from the scholarly (and pseudo-scholarly) associations that rhetoric acquired after the codification of its persuasive techniques and language tropes or figures. Rhetoric, in this sense, is an ‘over the fence’ word, that is to say, it is used to describe what others do, is only applied to an outsider group, and is often roughly equivalent to ‘bluster’...” (Partington 2003: 213).

in Marxist Participatory Action Research (PAR) that was aimed at the “transformation of the cultural, political and economic structures which reproduce poverty and marginalization” (Leal 2010: 91) were appropriated by the World Bank. Because of growing dissent to structural adjustment, the PAR language became a tool to justify the reduction of the state:

“[b]y employing the language of ‘empowerment’, ‘self-reliance’, and ‘participation’, the Bank assumed a populist appearance reminiscent of PAR. The new rhetoric assumed a pseudo-political stance in its suggestion that the ‘crisis of governance’ in many countries is due to the ‘appropriation of the machinery of government by the elite to serve their own interests’, and went so far as to state that a ‘deep political malaise stymies action in most countries’. At a first glance, one might naively infer that the logical implication is to call for people to be empowered to overturn the current and oppressive state of affairs through increased political participation. However, the actual intent is somewhat different. By having identified the nasty state as the culprit, the World Bank was not advocating a popular government, but rather creating a populist justification for the removal of the state from the economy and its substitution by the market” (Leal 2010: 93).

Another indicator of mainstreaming fitting the criteria of a neoliberal buzzword is that the term lacks a substantial definition. In the following quote from the grey literature, the authors rely on metaphor to define mainstreaming:

“[Mainstreaming] obviously derives from the metaphor of a small, isolated flow of water being drawn into the mainstream of a river where it will expand to flow smoothly without loss or diversion. Therefore ‘mainstreaming risk reduction’ describes a process to fully incorporate disaster risk reduction into relief and development policy and practice. It means radically expanding and enhancing disaster risk reduction so that it becomes normal practice, fully institutionalised within an agency’ relief and development agenda” (La Trobe and Davis 2005: 16).

Picciotto (2002), writing as a World Bank Group evaluation specialist, provides the only peer reviewed article found that attempts to fully define *mainstreaming* and again relies on riverine imagery. Picciotto suggests that “mainstreaming brings to the surface the turmoil of the deep” (ibid: 323) and argues that mainstreaming is an inherently political and difficult process because of its efforts to bring about change. He states, “[i]n the development assistance business, mainstreaming means the widespread adoption of a new policy, a new approach to the delivery of public services or a new method of program management, taking full account of the country context” (Picciotto 2002: 329). In his work, change is the essential feature of policy mainstreaming and

mainstreaming is a tool for realigning developing economies into global processes and thus changing the policy environment.

“In today’s volatile economic environment, frequent mainstreaming of new concepts and lessons by the society is a necessity. To retain their effectiveness, policies, programs and organizations need to be adjusted periodically. For example, as the global economic environment changes, public policies and programs must reposition their boundaries, merge with other public initiatives or restructure their goals and instruments. Facilitating this process is the major task of World Bank assistance to developing countries” (Picciotto 2002: 324).

Picciotto’s contribution indicates the inherently political nature of the work of policy mainstreaming both internally/domestically and externally through global processes. His work generated as a World Bank evaluation specialist, further demonstrates the close alignment that mainstreaming has with the neoliberal post-NPM policy agenda. Finally, Picciotto articulates the instrumental nature of mainstreaming as a tool for change. Mainstreaming is the conduit through which World Bank endorsed reforms are intended to be supported.

In short, the term mainstreaming is a neoliberal buzzword. The rhetoric of mainstreaming is intended to denote an effort to change the policy landscape and to address complex wicked policy. However, since it has been classified as a buzzword, its genuineness as a policy change tool begs the following question; how is a policy prescription, best defined by a riverine metaphor, used by the Government of Nepal to achieve DRR policy integration? Additionally, mainstreaming bears all the hallmarks of a post-NPM policy tool. Its close relationship with neoliberalism ought to raise concern in anyone familiar with the disaster vulnerability literature (discussed in Chapter 3).

## **2.5 Lessons from Mainstreaming Complex Policies: Gender, Environment, and DRR**

This final section examines literature from gender mainstreaming, environmental policy integration (EPI), and mainstreaming DRR to glean a clearer understanding of the policy process that is under the microscope. Gender mainstreaming was selected because of the rich vein of research found in feminist scholarship that offers both practical and conceptual insights into the process of policy mainstreaming. Environmental policy integration was selected also because of its vast body of literature and its close association with DRR.

DRR mainstreaming is included to point to gaps in the existing literature. All three of these complex policies share a similar route to mainstreaming promotion through either the UN and/or the EU endorsing mainstreaming/integration in practice (e.g. environmental policy integration (EPI) literature is largely resultant from the EU enshrining EPI into law, the gender mainstreaming literature was in response to the Beijing Platform for Action 1995, and mainstreaming DRR through the HFA 2005).

### **2.5.1 Gender Mainstreaming**

Gender is perhaps the policy area to be most associated with mainstreaming. The global attempt at gender mainstreaming is illustrative of the conceptual and practical problems associated with the post- NPM mainstreaming agenda and has many lessons for mainstreaming DRR. Gender mainstreaming was one of the first complex policy areas to be promoted by the United Nations in 1995 (van Eerdewijk et al. 2014). The Platform for Action resultant from the 1995 UN Beijing Fourth World Conference urged:

“...governments and other actors promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively” (United Nations 1995: 27).

Given the attention to gender mainstreaming by feminist studies it would appear that gender mainstreaming was an applied solution, underpinned by a vast body of feminist literature and conceptualisation. However, this was not the case; “[r]ather than emerging out of or being embedded in a philosophy about gender inequality as a structural phenomenon, [gender mainstreaming] tends to stem from policy-making exigencies or current styles of fashion” (Daly 2005: 440). This relates to mainstreaming’s popularization in the 1990s as a neoliberal policy solution for dealing with complex wicked policies.

Gender mainstreaming rapidly gained ascendancy worldwide on an unprecedented scale (True and Mintrom 2001), with many supranational bodies such as the UN, World Bank, EU and many nation-states adopting its approach. The reason given for its widespread adoption even in nation-states where gender equality is low, is because it presented no real threat or challenge to extant neoliberal processes. For example, Bacchi and Eveline (2003) find congruent characteristics between neoliberalism and mainstreaming:

“Dominant forms of mainstreaming are clearly congruent with this self-managed model of governance. They put in place processes of accountability and self-surveillance over the performance of public officials. Despite the rhetoric of devolution and self-management they strengthen the political arm of government through underfunded expectations that public servants will do more for less, and through subsequent controls over competitive and ad hoc distribution of resources” (Bacchi and Eveline 2003: 103-104).

Herein lies the tension, neoliberalism “has had a debilitating and gender-specific impact on the lives of diverse groups of women, an outcome patently at odds with the intent to remedy gender-based disadvantage that stands as the cornerstone of gender mainstreaming initiatives” (Teghtsoonian 2004: 268). As Rao and Kelleher argue ten years after the Beijing Platform for Action the gender mainstreaming agenda is “falling through the cracks” (Rao and Kelleher 2005: 59). Overall, feminist literature points to many fault-lines in the gender mainstreaming agenda (Daly 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006). The reductionist rhetoric of mainstreaming gender has resulted in technocratic approaches that include tool kits and guidelines. Creating technocrats rather than feminists, mainstreaming has depoliticised the complex-policy providing no challenge to the existing structural power imbalances (Payne 2011).

### **2.5.2 Environmental Policy Integration**

Although the field of disasters has preferred the practitioner term ‘mainstreaming’, policy integration is a similar concept used in the environmental and climate change literature. Environmental policy integration (EPI) has been written about extensively and has an academic gravitas that mainstreaming lacks. The academic attention has come from the push to integrate environmental concerns into other disparate sectors through the UN sponsored 1992 Earth Summit’s Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Much of the EPI literature focuses on integration in a European context. This body of work was precipitated by the need for clarity because of the legal aspects of EPI in the European Union where EPI has been enshrined in numerous state legislations and in the European Treaty (Jordan and Lenschow 2010).

The first academic discussion of policy integration is found in Underdal’s 1980 widely cited work on marine policy integration. One of the few discussions to consider policy integration as a process as well as an output (Persson 2004),



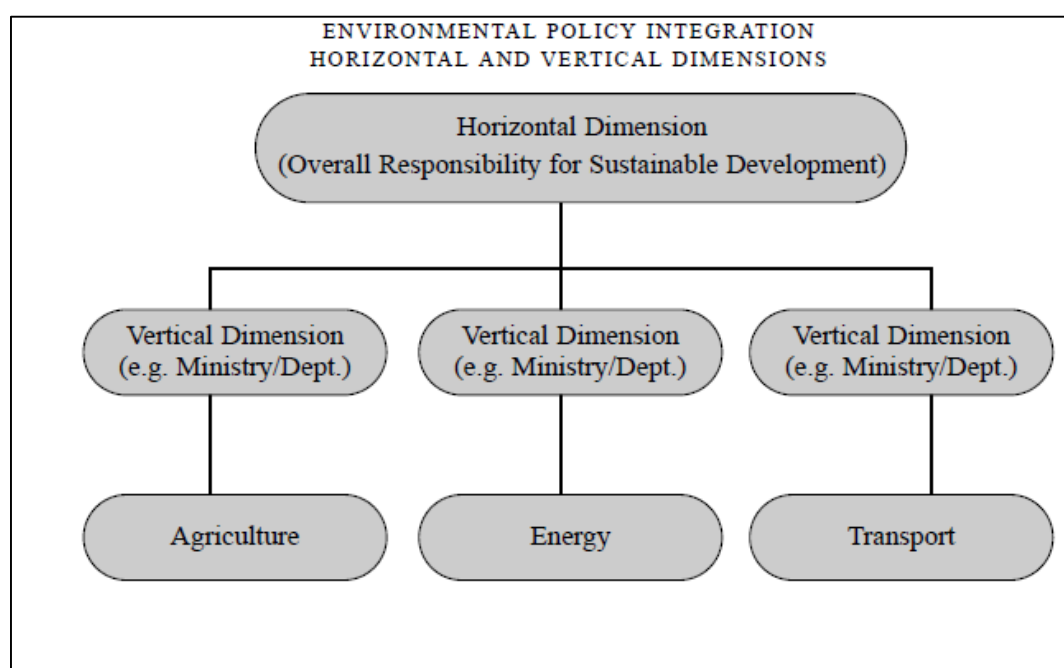
Underdal's discussion provides a useful conceptual underpinning of policy integration:

“To ‘integrate’ means to unify, to put parts together into a whole. Integrated policy, then, means a policy where the constituent elements are brought together and made subjects to a single, unifying conception. More specifically, I suggest that to qualify as integrated a policy must meet three basic requirements, viz comprehensiveness, aggregation and consistency” (Underdal 1980: 159).

Underdal's discussion of policy integration involves three stages, which he terms, “comprehensiveness to the input stage; aggregation to the processing of inputs; and consistency to outputs” (Underdal 1980: 159; Persson 2004: 11). By *comprehensiveness*, Underdal considers the scope of the policy integration including: time (long term planning), space (extension of geographic area), actors, and proportion of issues. *Aggregation* refers to a broad evaluation of the costs and benefits of the integrated policy rather than an evaluation of policy alternatives from the perspective of each actor/sector; “one important implication of this is that the integration of policy is not purely a technical exercise; it implies weighing interests and setting priorities” (Underdal 1980: 161). Finally, *consistency* refers to the standardisation of the policy and whether the integrated policy is ‘in harmony’ both in its vertical (i.e. unity between policy levels) and horizontal (i.e. unity across executive agencies) dimensions. Although comprehensive, Underdal's work has been criticised as too dependent on the rationality of the policy process (Persson 2004).

The dominant conceptualisation of policy integration is that it has both a horizontal (cross-government) and vertical (sectoral) structural component. Lafferty and Hovden (2003) embedded this in their discussion of EPI in the ‘government landscape’.

Figure 2-1. Environmental Policy Integration



(Source: Lafferty and Hovden 2003:14)

Vertical environmental policy integration (VEPI) refers to a ministerial sector responsibly (e.g. health, industry, education, etc.) integrating environmental objectives in its plans, policies and initiatives. VEPI aims to merge “environmental objectives with ...sectoral objectives to form an environmentally prudent decision-making premise in its work” (Lafferty and Hovden 2003: 12). Horizontal environmental policy integration (HEPI) is the role of a central high level authority (e.g. cabinet, government body, commission) to ensure the coordination and prioritisation of environmental concerns across the sectors. Nunan et al. (2012) adhere to the vertical and horizontal arrangements, but argue Lafferty and Hovden’s model is representative of a mature realisation of government EPI. In nation-states that are just establishing EPI, Nunan et al. argue a more realistic model is one where VEPI is situated in the political apex (such as Prime Minister Office or Cabinet), which then drives/compels EPI throughout sectors. The HEPI then is the environment agency or other government body that possess less power but is tasked with cross-sector policy coordination.

Environmental policy has historically been on the lower end of the policy hierarchy (Lafferty and Hovden 2003). Thus, to integrate environmental

considerations into other non-environment related sectors there is a need to raise its profile against other policy agendas. Lafferty and Hovden (2003) argue that given the limitations of the carrying capacity of nature, EPI must be given 'principled priority' over other non-environmental sectors. However, they argue that even if EPI has 'principled priority' choices should be arrived at democratically and not always will environmental concerns be given priority in policy decisions. This leads to the issue of 'trade-offs' and the negotiations that ensue when integrating environmental concerns into other sectors (Dyrhaug 2014). Within the EPI literature is a preoccupation with balancing the reality of economic growth with the consequences of environmental degradation. If this negotiation process is not managed correctly this can lead to policy fragmentation (Chucku 2010<sup>10</sup>). In spite of this body of research, the results of EPI have been less than expected. As Dupont (2015: Online) writes, "EPI never lived up to its potential, with measures fizzling out and business-as-usual continuing among compartmentalised policy departments".

### **2.5.3 Mainstreaming DRR: Existing Literature and Research Gaps**

The lack of academic literature on mainstreaming DRR both makes this discussion brief and easily identifies the gap in the literature that this research fills. Pearce (2003) suggests that the *integration* of disaster management and community planning is required in an effort to shift focus away from disaster response to disaster mitigation. She points to differences in ideology between the two disciplines as a barrier to integration but does not address the mechanisms or the policy implications of integrating disaster management into community planning.

Alexander discusses mainstreaming DRM into the built environment which he defines as "...making [disaster risk management] an integral part of governance, public administration and the general maintenance of security" (Alexander 2008: 20). He suggests that the knowledge already exists in "construction, organisations, management and health care" to integrate DRM into the built environment, but what are lacking are ways to "apply existing knowledge efficiently and effectively" (Alexander 2008, 22).

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<sup>10</sup> Writing from a climate change perspective.

Writing from the perspective of international aid organisations, Wamsler (2006) argues for mainstreaming DRR into urban planning and housing and suggests that both the marginality of DRR and urban planning within aid organisations and the “incompatibility” between the two professional disciplines complicates the mainstreaming agenda. Twigg and Steiner (2002) examine this from the perspective of organisational learning in NGOs. They found several barriers to mainstreaming, including “...in NGOs working in both relief and development, institutional and cultural tension between emergency and development departments is evident, fuelled by lack of clarity about the mandates of the emergency teams” (Twigg and Steiner 2002: 475). The authors rhetorically question whether the separation of distinct DM and development departments in NGOs helps or hinders the mainstreaming of DRR into operations.

Finally, Handmer and Dovers (2013) in the book Handbook of Disaster Policies and Institutions discuss mainstreaming disaster management policy throughout government. Theirs is the strongest contribution to the discussion on mainstreaming and warrants attention:

“There is a continuum between the institutional choices of placing something in the more direct political control of a line department, with the risk of reaction to short-term imperatives only, *versus* the independence and greater longevity of a potentially unresponsive statutory authority. Similarly, there is a continuum between strong mechanisms for (vertical and/or horizontal) whole of government coordination, with a risk of dissipating efforts through the coordination processes, *versus* the possibly clearer purpose and development of control and capacity in specific agencies, but with less coordination” (Handmer and Dovers 2013: 166).

It is suggested here that a policy may become dissipated in the process of vertical and horizontal mainstreaming. This remains conjecture, as there is little empirical evidence to substantiate whether or not mainstreaming DRR policies throughout a government would cause the agenda to be weakened or strengthened. The spectre of this occurring may further contribute to the dominant disaster management organisation resisting policy change that may weaken disaster prioritization within existing organisations. As seen with the global experience of gender mainstreaming this might be correct. Through the process of mainstreaming, gender became a technocratic exercise that lost the political motivation of structurally realigning gender relations and power imbalances.

None of the above literature takes a negative stance towards the concept of DRR/DRM integration and mainstreaming. This indicates a general consensus that the concept of integrating DRR/DRM throughout an organisation is necessary and valid. However, two main themes emerge from the limited research that exists. First, the literature points to the cultural components of traditional disaster management organisations as a barrier to mainstreaming. Terms such as “incompatibility” (Wamsler 2006) and “institutional and cultural tensions,” (Twigg and Steiner 2002) stand out and corroborate the argument made in the first half of the chapter that disaster management’s quasi-paramilitary ethos is a barrier to changing the policy environment to the development focused DRR. Additionally, disaster management as a policy issue remains marginal within most organisations, which makes integrating it into another policy sector especially difficult (Wamsler 2006). The second theme that emerges is that of the lack of understanding of the concept of mainstreaming and how it should be implemented. As in the case of Pearce (2003), the literature discusses mainstreaming as an end goal but does not examine the process to achieve mainstreaming. Alexander (2008) notes that the missing link is how to “effectively and efficiently” integrate DRM into the built sector. Most importantly, it is unknown what the consequences are of fully mainstreaming DRR throughout institutions, or if that is even possible (Handmer and Dovers 2013).

From the above discussion, it is clear to see that this research fills a significant gap in the existing literature through its critical assessment of both the concept of mainstreaming and the how the resultant process unfolds in a complex governing environment such as Nepal. No other existing literature exists that looks at mainstreaming DRR from the perspective of policy paradigm change (to be discussed in Chapter 3) and thus this research is an original contribution to knowledge.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

Mainstreaming DRR is intended to be an applied policy solution, but as this chapter has identified, both mainstreaming and DRR are riddled with tensions and unmet challenges that suggest implementation will be difficult. On one hand, there is mainstreaming’s uncomfortable association with neoliberalism as a mechanism intended to correct the faulty application of first-wave neoliberal

public administration. Because of the clear link between neoliberalism and increased disaster risk, any policy tool that comes from neoliberalism ought to be scrutinized. On the other hand, there is DRR which is a relatively new policy agenda. Its lineage as an offshoot of disaster management is problematic. The field of disaster management has itself never been fully conceptualized. For several decades, disaster management was a policy instrument of central government defence agendas. Over time, disaster management has become institutionalised within governments. The legacy of its defence and security origins has conditioned disaster management to have a culture that is antithetical to both mainstreaming and DRR's developmental policy agendas.

On concluding this chapter, one thing stands out clearly: at the heart of mainstreaming DRR is an effort to stimulate significant policy change. This chapter began with an examination of the drive to change established disaster management policy to that of disaster risk reduction. It then explored a policy tool (i.e. mainstreaming) aimed to stimulate this policy change throughout organisations but found it to be highly problematic and wanting. Nonetheless, change is a theme that is shared by both mainstreaming and DRR. Because of this conclusion, the next chapter delves deeper into the theme of change within the disaster vulnerability literature and discusses existing theories and frameworks of policy paradigm change.

Another conclusion to come from this chapter is that there are two approaches to changing policy through mainstreaming- a technocratic approach and a political approach. The technocratic approach has been the favoured global approach for gender and environmental policy integration with minimal success. No examples were found of a political approach to mainstreaming that sought to address the underlying issues of inequality. Given that neoliberal policy dissuades dissent and reform, a political approach is unlikely to be the global prescription for DRR. The next chapter will illustrate how problematic the prospect of not addressing underlying roots causes that drive disaster risk can be.

## 3 Theories and Frameworks for Understanding Mainstreaming DRR

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to further elaborate on the theme of policy change uncovered in the previous chapter, which argued that changing the policy landscape is the underlying factor behind the promotion of both mainstreaming and DRR. This chapter starts with a broad overview of disaster vulnerability literature. The vulnerability literature is foundational because it is here that the critique of neoliberalism (and by extension post-NPM policies discussed in Chapter 2) as a driver of increased risk originated. The vulnerability literature also establishes the need for cross-sector DRR approaches and calls for radical change to social, political, and economic realms in order to reduce disaster risk. The second half of the chapter examines the policy change literature. From this body of literature, a framework is developed to guide the analysis and discussion of the empirical evidence from Nepal.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to briefly introduce and define a key concept used throughout this chapter, that of the policy paradigm. Hall (1993) writing about policy change, describes a policy paradigm as:

“...a framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing. Like a Gestalt, this framework is embedded in the very terminology through which policy makers communicate about their work, and it is influential

precisely because so much of it is taken for granted and unamenable to scrutiny as a whole. I am going to call this interpretive framework a policy paradigm” (Hall 1993: 279).

In this chapter, the concept of a paradigm is applied both to research and policy agendas. It is conceptually useful because it defines the parameters of the different discourses that surround disaster policy. It also denotes the totality of a research or policy agenda, which hints at the difficulty that lies in changing a paradigm.

### **3.2 Disaster Vulnerability Literature**

This section investigates the disaster literature with particular attention to the disaster vulnerability literature. It begins with a brief overview of the historical evolution of disaster studies, because without doing so, it is difficult to comprehend how radical of a departure the vulnerability literature was (and continues to be) from the response centred disaster management outlined in Chapter 2.

Most commonly, disasters were conceptualised as ‘acts of god,’ meaning little could be done from a policy perspective to prevent or prepare for one (Handmer and Dovers 2013) resulting in low political accountability for disaster events (Olson 2000). That said, there are glimpses of an alternate view of disasters that did not discount human agency. For example, one is found in a debate between Voltaire and Rousseau during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment era . The debate occurred over a series of letters, of which the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake featured. It is Rousseau’s reflections on the earthquake that show he was not comfortable with assigning blame solely on God for the heavy loss of life and destruction. He writes in his letter to Voltaire:

“Without departing from you subject of Lisbon, admit, for example, that nature did not construct twenty thousand houses of six to seven stories there, and that if the inhabitants of this great city had been more equally spread out and more lightly lodged, the damage would have been much less and perhaps of no account” (quoted in Dynes 1999: 10).

Dynes (1999) suggests Rousseau represented the beginning of a “social science view” of disasters.



However, it was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that disasters began to be systematically studied and understood as events where human agency could change disaster outcomes. Since then, the literature has been preoccupied with how disasters change and transform the political, social and environmental realms.

Written just over a decade apart, both Prince (1920) and Carr's (1932) work on disasters is illustrative of an emerging disaster social science approach. Prince's Catastrophe and Social Change (1920) is considered the first comprehensive disaster study to be undertaken (Scanlon 1988; Dynes and Quarantelli 1992). Prince wrote Catastrophe and Social Change as his dissertation and based it on the 1917 Halifax Explosion<sup>11</sup>, an event that he had a first-hand experience of, living and working in Halifax Nova Scotia at the time of the disaster. He conducted a two-year longitudinal study using interviews, documents and observation (Phillips 2014). As suggestive of its title, the dissertation was concerned with the transformative effects of the explosion on Halifax society. Some of his writing resonates true (particularly when read with the 2015 Nepal earthquake in mind) almost a hundred years later; "the point is, catastrophe always means social change. There is not always progress. It is well to guard against confusion here" (Prince 1920, cited in Scanlon 1988: 223). Another important contribution to early disaster studies was made in 1932, by a sociologist by the name of Carr opined:

"So long as the ship rides out the storm, so long as the city resists the earth-shocks, so long as the levees hold, there is no disaster. It is the collapse of the cultural protections that constitute the disaster proper" (Carr 1932, cited in Dombrowsky 1998 p. 18)

Almost two hundred years after Rousseau, Carr again raises the spectre of human development, or as he terms it, "the collapse of the cultural protections" as the cause of disasters.

Researchers in the fields of social psychology and sociology were preoccupied with the theme of change. This stream of research was interested in what, if any, changes occurred in crowd behaviour and other social interactions in a disaster

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<sup>11</sup> During the World War I and II, Halifax harbour was a strategic point in North America for mustering supply vessels to support the war effort in Britain. The Halifax Explosion was the result of the crash of a munitions ship with another vessel in Halifax harbour in 1917. It resulted in the largest explosion prior to Hiroshima, killing close to 2000 people and left 6000 people homeless (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Online).

environment (Perry 2006). Government funding opportunities resultant from the Cold War spurred this research agenda. Policy makers were eager to know how people would behave during a nuclear attack. Since nuclear war was not a viable research site to study the phenomena, disaster sites caused by flooding and other hazards were studied instead. Early research played a role in illuminating many disaster myths concerning people's anti-social behaviours in times of emergency (Fritz and Marks 1954; Dynes and Quarantelli 1968). It was also in this era when several disaster research institutes were established, particularly in the U.S (Phillips 2014). The early study of disasters was pioneered and heavily influenced by western scholarship, a trend that continues to this day.

Meanwhile, the study of disasters became a sub-field of Geography with a particular focus on hazards. In this perspective, a disaster is an "extreme event that arises when a hazard agent intersects with a social system" (Perry 2006: 9). The main focus of study is the hazard, for example earthquake, flood, or landslide and its intersection with human settlements. The hazard-disaster distinction was easily confounded and they became almost synonymous with each other (Wisner 2016).

Gilbert F. White, an American geographer, wrote extensively on flood plain management and is considered the founder of this approach (see also work by White's PhD students- Burton and Kates 1964; White, Burton, Kates 1978). White was greatly influenced by Harlan Barrows' work on human ecology. Barrows describes the objectives of human ecology thusly, "[g]eography will aim to make clear the relationships existing between natural environments and the distribution and activities of man" (Barrows 1923: 3). Barrows' human ecology is clearly echoed in Gilbert White's 1945 PhD dissertation:

"Floods are 'acts of God,' but flood losses are largely acts of man. Human encroachment upon the flood plains of rivers accounts for the high annual total of flood losses" (White 1945 from Kates 2011: 8).

The idea conveyed is that humans are able to influence disaster outcomes. Much of White's work focused on addressing policy concerns such as sustainable flood plain use, and flood plain mitigation such as levees and channelization. White established a precedent for disaster research to speak directly to on-going policy challenges. For example, his work was influential on the formulation of US floodplain policies like the Unified National Program for

Floodplain Management (Kates 2011). This conceptualisation of hazards-disasters meant that disasters could be managed by "... applying scientific knowledge of the hazard events in ways that allowed prediction, warning and preparedness" (Wisner 2016 Online).

White and his protégées established a research paradigm that is known as the natural hazards paradigm. The hazards paradigm encouraged a framework upon which management of disasters came through technological and social engineered solutions (Wisner 2016) which corresponded to the practice of disaster/emergency management discussed in Chapter 2. The natural hazards research was easily translated into policy solutions. It achieved a 'narrowing of vision' through centralised ordering of nature (Scott 1998). It fostered development and thus posed no challenge to the prevailing capitalist economic and political ideologies. While the natural hazards paradigm would continue to inform policy and practice, the academic literature took a significant leap away from the hazards paradigm in the late 1970s. This new academic paradigm, called the vulnerability paradigm, is the focus of the next section. It is in that literature where disaster theory presents a strong critique of the capitalist (and by extension neoliberal) agenda as a driver of disaster risk.

### **3.2.1 The Vulnerability Paradigm Shift**

In the mid-1970s, disaster scholarship presented a powerful and complex alternative to the existing hazard paradigm. Researchers such as O'Keefe et al. (1976) and Cuny (1983) argued against hazards being the sole causal mechanisms of disaster. They deconstructed the notion of 'natural' disaster and in doing so disasters were reconceptualised as social constructs. As Quarantelli opined, "a disaster is not a physical happening, it is a social event" (Quarantelli 1992: 1). Vulnerability research also challenged the embedded structural forces that contribute to the production of vulnerability.

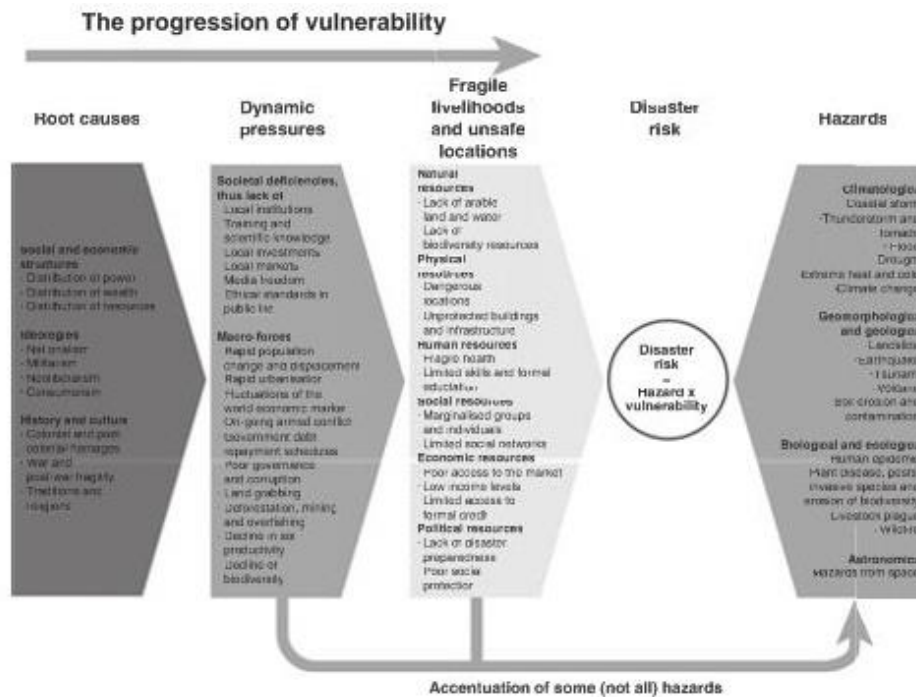
Behind the work of the disaster vulnerability theorists was an undercurrent of neo-Marxism found in "the infusion of, in the 1970s, of cultural and human ecology with considerations of political economy" (Escobar 1999: 2). Research challenged traditional apolitical environmental analysis by combining ecology with the Marxist inspired political economy (Peet and Watts 1996). A growing recognition emerged that local environmental conditions are linked to larger

political and economic processes. The close association between political ecology and disaster vulnerability is found in the scholarship of Piers Blaikie. In 1985, Blaikie authored The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries. It is considered to be a foundational text of a political ecology approach. Blaikie would later be the lead author (along with Ben Wisner, who co-authored with O’Keefe 1976) of the first edition of At-Risk: Natural Hazards, Peoples Vulnerability and Disasters, a seminal publication in the disaster vulnerability approach.

The disaster vulnerability approach, and its neo-Marxist conceptualization, was stimulated from observing the “explicitly inequitable social impact” of disaster such as the 1976 Guatemala “class quake” (Wisner et al. 2004: 9) where damage was clearly demarcated in the areas of slum and informal settlements. Buildings in the more affluent city centre were only minimally damaged (Lewis 1999). Throughout the 1990s, the vulnerability approach slowly gained ground as a disaster research paradigm (Wisner 2016). At a micro-level, researchers focused on the complex interplay of vulnerability determinants—such as gender (Morrow and Enarson 2000), health (Lindsay 2003), age (Ngo 2001), and poverty (Fothergill and Peek 2004)—on increasing disaster risk. At the macro-level, the role of political-economic processes on an individual and community’s ability to cope with disaster became the focus of inquiry. Disasters were no longer solely external environmental threats but were intensified by factors such as institutional failures and poor governance (Ahrens and Rudolph 2006).

A central tenet of the disaster vulnerability literature is that global economic and political ideologies are a root cause of disaster vulnerability, as illustrated by the Pressure and Release Model (Wisner et al. 2012) shown in Figure 3-1. This is a radical proposition that if taken to its full conclusion means that neoliberalism needs to be upended and replaced (with what is uncertain) in order for disaster risk to be minimized. Empirical studies that linked neoliberalism with increased disaster risk were outlined in Chapter 2 and certainly support this contention.

Figure 3-1. The Progression of Vulnerability



(source: Wisner et al. 2012: 23)

The emphasis on vulnerability conceptually realigned disaster management from an event driven (hazard) phenomena to a complex process driven (development) phenomena (Manyena et al. 2013). The problem of disasters became an uncharted wicked policy problem and it is at this juncture where the gulf between the response focused practitioner and the vulnerability focused academic grew. Addressing the vulnerability literature through policy/practice entails addressing complex and political issues of inequity. Wisner (2001) provides an example of this policy-research divide in his discussion of El Salvador:

“Given the highly politicised and controversial nature of land-tenure in El Salvador, little was done in the post-Mitch period to resettle vulnerable people on safer land. Instead, emphasis was laid on building new dams and levees, and on attempts to develop flood warning and evacuation systems” (Wisner 2001: 257).

Instead of addressing the root cause of vulnerability (lack of land-tenure and its systematic roots in inequality) the approach taken in the El Salvador example was more in line with the existing hazards/disaster management approach to devise technical rather than political solutions.

It is from the vulnerability paradigm that the policy prescription of disaster risk reduction originates. DRR's emphasis on integrating development with disaster risk reduction is in keeping with the process driven perspective of disaster vulnerability. Knowing that the global neoliberal policy environment favours conservative and non-political agendas, careful attention needs to be paid to what happens to this *radical* interpretation of disaster risk in the policy prescription of DRR. A brief overview of DRR programming suggests the *radical* is lost in the policy implementation. For example, emphasis has been placed on sympathetic neoliberal risk reduction schemes such as insurance mechanisms especially in the developed world (FEMA 2017; GOV.UK 2017; Michel-Kerjan and Kunreuther 2011) and on public-private partnerships (UNISDR 2016b; World Economic Forum 2016) rather than on realigning the political and financial drivers of risk. Lewis and Kelman (2012) indicate that the discourse that surrounds a disaster event tends to avoid addressing root causes:

“Information supplied has to do with *what*, *where* and *how big* disasters have been, rather than focusing on *why* or to *whom*. The realities of the *status quo* tend to remain unexplored, obscure, and insufficiently penetrated” (Lewis and Kelman 2012: 3, emphasis in original).

Explicit in the vulnerability literature is the need for systemic change and transformation of neoliberal political/economic structures and institutions in order to reduce disaster vulnerability. Given that the neoliberal policy environment dissuades dissent, it is not surprising that the radical elements of the vulnerability paradigm is lost in implementation. This also helps to explain why policy mainstreaming has become a policy prescription for DRR. Given its buzzword status, mainstreaming is unlikely to activate the radical political and economic changes suggested by the vulnerability literature.

### **3.2.2 The Missing Political Science Discourse in Disasters and Development**

The advent of the vulnerability research paradigm conceptually opened up space for disaster researchers to explore the politics surrounding disasters (e.g. Middleton and O’Keefe 1998; Kelman 2011). As mentioned, disaster studies had been the purview of sociology and geography, and in keeping with their research focus, much had been made of the economic, social, and physical aspects of disaster politics. Pelling and Dill (2010) outline the Geographer’s conception of disaster politics:

“Disaster politics analysis focuses on the interaction of social and political actors and framing institutions in preparing for and responding to extreme natural events, and suggests that the disaster events and their management are part of unfolding political histories” (Pelling and Dill 2010: 21).

Recent scholarship on disasters has begun to explore the broader disaster governance terrains of disasters and risk reduction (see Tierney 2012; Jones et.al. 2014 for their discussion of DRR governance in Nepal; and Jones et al. 2016 on Bihar and Nepal). Missing in the literature are comparative political studies that give specific attention to public administration and policy of disaster management and disaster risk reduction. One reason given for this is the common (although mistaken) understanding of disasters being failures of infrastructure and thus belonging to the field of engineering rather than political science (Olson 2000). Pelling and Dill further add that “the discomfort caused to the humanitarian community by a political or developmental reading of disaster risk reduction and response, for good strategic reasons, has also helped to move the gaze of disaster analysis away from politics and towards the economic, social and physical impacts of disasters” (Pelling and Dill 2010: 34). Consequently, there is very little understanding of the specific governmental politics surrounding disaster management and DRR. What does exist reads like an elixir to those who seek to understand how and why DRR policies can succeed in a government context.

Olson (2000), a political scientist, suggests several ‘points of departure’ for a political inquiry into disasters. He writes, “In any disaster, government officials are confronted with the need to not only *manage* the situation but also *explain* it” (Olson 2000: 266, emphasis in original). In light of the growing recognition that political leaders need to be held accountable for failures in mitigation/DRR activities (e.g. building regulation and code failures), he postulates that issue suppression, non-decision making and agenda control are all factors that prohibit action. Issue suppression and agenda control relate to the process of getting policy issues onto the political agenda and are highly related to the policy paradigm change literature discussed below. Non-decision making is defined as:

“... a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision making arena; or, failing all these things, maimed or destroyed in the decision implementing stage of the policy process” (Bachrach and Baratz 1970 in Olson 2000: 274-275).

Political analysis is not only lacking in the disaster literature, but also in the development literature (Leftwich 2005). The emphasis in development has been placed on “technical innovation and improvement through better governance, public sector management, institution-building, capacity enhancement” (ibid 2005: 193). Leftwich argues that these initiatives “are ‘the technicist illusion’ because these efforts do not seriously impact upon the social and economic structures and forces shaping the tides of politics and in turn shaping the character of the state” (ibid 2005: 193). This argument echo’s what Bennet (2016) said in Chapter 2 concerning the lack of substantive change within the humanitarian sector being thwarted by a focus on the mechanics of aid rather than the underlying systemic and political issues. In both disaster studies and development, the lack of political analysis of the implementing institutions and policies represents a real gap in knowledge. Without a better understanding, it is hard to see how implementation will improve.

### **3.2.3 Development Discourse**

So far this discussion has focused on the history of disaster management theory and practice. Since DRR bridges both disaster management with development, it is necessary to examine the progression of development discourse. The modern conception of ‘development’ coalesced in the aftermath of World War Two and the onset of the Cold War. Central to the mainstream concept of development is the idea of modernization and growing economies. The dominant economic theories that underpinned the development discourse of the time, Keynesian and Neoliberalism, have previously been discussed in section 2.3.2.

Rostow’s book The Stages of Economic Growth: An Anti-Communist Manifesto (1960) conceptualized development occurring in a linear progression that required instituting various mechanisms that would then allow a struggling economy to ‘take flight’. It assumed that applying the same rationality and progress found in developed economies could be directly applied to “underdeveloped” economies. Explicit in this work, was a political imperative to counter communism. Development was a means to an end to sway newly independent former colonies to be allied with the West. Rostow’s view of development was critiqued as teleological and overly simplistic. In practice, applying western models of development did not lead to economic development.



A competing model of development soon came out of Latin America, called dependency theory. Dependency theory posits that there is a core and periphery. The core comprises of wealthy industrialized states that exploit poor 'underdeveloped' periphery states. This relationship is skewed with a balance of power that maintains the status quo. The inequality between the periphery and core is "a deep-seated historical process, rooted in the internationalization of capitalism" (Ferraro 2008: Online). A noticeable difference between the Stages of Growth and dependency theory is that Rostow took poverty to be the starting point of his theory, whereas, dependency theorists viewed poverty as an endpoint. Underdevelopment and poverty are the end result of a "colonialism, slavery, and resource extraction" (Reid-Henry 2012: Online).

Neoliberalism and its ideology of 'trade not aid' and structural adjustment has dominated the global approach to development since the late 1970s.

Neoliberalism and its effects on developing states was discussed in detail (2.3.2), so is only briefly mentioned here. A counterpoint to neoliberal development discourse is Post-Development theory (see Esteva and Escobar 2017; Gudynas 2016). Ziai (2017) summarizes some core arguments held by post-developmentalists:

1. The term 'underdevelopment' was devised as "a political campaign to maintain or increases western influence in Africa, Asia and Latin America... in the context of the Cold War and processes of decolonization..." (3).
2. The concept of development is vague and unclear. It has been applied "to just about any measure officially intended to improve people's lives, from building roads to economic reforms...its contours are blurred and it has become a shapeless, amoeba-like concept..." (3).
3. The idea of development is itself a construction of power. "Knowledge about 'development' therefore always implies a claim on how other ('underdeveloped') people should live and how their lives can be improved, and thus a justification of intervention (knowledge as power)" (3).
4. The classification of a majority of people as 'underdeveloped' establishes a clear hierarchy with Western culture being hegemonic and "other societies as deficient" (3).
5. Finally, "increasing numbers of people in the South, disappointed by the promises and exclude from the project of 'development' resist Westernization, reject this economic worldview, engage in alternatives..." (4).

The trajectory of development discourse remained separate from the disaster discourse until the disaster vulnerability literature joined the two up. However, the disaster vulnerability work remains on the fringe of development theory, although they point to similar root causes for both disaster vulnerability and poverty and both share neo-Marxist identification. Both research paradigms critique dominant political and economic systems and see them to be working against efforts to resolve issues related to development and disasters. Like dependency theory, both vulnerability and post-developmentalists view present conditions as the result of long standing historical patterns. From the brief description of post-development theory, it is easy to formulate a post-development critique of top-down mainstreaming DRR as a hegemonic attempt to increase western neoliberalism influence in less developed countries. Another similarity between the disaster and development discourses is a preference for tidy linear and rationalistic policy approaches. Although discredited, the conceptual idea of Rostow's stages approach to development is still salient. If only it was that easy to stimulate development to "take-flight" with the right policy inputs.

### **3.2.4 The Importance of the Vulnerability Paradigm**

The vulnerability literature is about change and radical transformation. This paradigm is the keystone that bridges all aspects of this thesis: it presents a critique of neoliberal governance, it calls for a significant reframing of the way disaster policies are conceived, and it links disaster with development processes. It took the radical reinterpretation of disasters through the vulnerability literature in order for the conceptual space to open for disasters to be viewed as political events. Vulnerability blew apart the traditional and somewhat 'tidy' approach of understanding disasters and brought attention to the processes and causation of disaster vulnerability. This is the root of DRR and helps to explain the global push to integrate DRR throughout development sectors. Translating the vulnerability literature into concrete action has proven to be a challenge. It is hoped that the following section will help to clarify the challenges associated with changing paradigms.

### 3.3 Changing Policy Paradigms

This section explores the policy paradigm change literature in order to develop a more substantive framework for analysis of the rhetoric and reality around mainstreaming DRR in Nepal. The theme of policy change has been found throughout the reviewed literature:

- the shift from disaster management to DRR is a significant change in disaster policy;
- the principal role of mainstreaming is to foster change in the policy environment;
- and the vulnerability literature, which contributed intellectually to the DRR agenda, argues for radical economic, social and political change.

Thus far, a principal argument that has come from the literature review chapters is that the rhetoric of *mainstreaming DRR* is about changing the policy landscape, but neoliberal discourse actively discourages any challenge to the neoliberal agenda. At this juncture, it would be possible to conduct fieldwork in Nepal with the knowledge that the concept of mainstreaming is a neoliberal buzzword and possibly of limited value in facilitating significant change. However, a deeper understanding of the process of change was desired, so although mainstreaming remains the policy area of focus, the processes that constrain progress are unpacked using theory and frameworks from the policy change literature.

The literature discussed in this section spans a continuum from the theoretical to a concrete set of indicators of policy integration. Firstly, Hall's (1993) "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policymaking in Britain" is discussed at length because it provides an excellent theoretical underpinning of the process of policy change. Secondly, Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier's (1993) Advocacy Coalition Framework is discussed. This work provides a framework to help visually distinguish and map the actors and determinants of policy change. Finally, the discussion ends with Candel and Biesbroek's (2016) paper entitled "Towards a processual understanding of policy integration", which bridges both policy change and policy integration. This work identifies the indicators that ought to accompany policy integration. This literature was selected because each of these bodies of work relate to each other and build upon each other (e.g. Candel and Biesbroek are greatly influenced by Hall's earlier work). The collection of the three bodies of work offer

theory, framework, and indicators upon which the fieldwork can later be analysed.

### **3.3.1 Hall: Ideas, Social Learning, and Paradigm Policy Change**

Hall's (1993) work on the role of ideas (social learning) on policy paradigm change is discussed at length here because it contributes to a theoretical rather than technical understanding of the underlying processes of policy change. Hall's work has influenced much of the subsequent literature on policy change—some of which is introduced in this section to further contextualize the discussion.

Hall's research follows from a *new institutionalism* approach to understanding political behaviour and development. New institutionalism emerged in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century as an alternative to the behavioural and pluralist approaches that had dominated the field of political science in the post-war period. Before the new institutionalist approach, the state's primary role was to act “as an arena for social conflict” (Bennett and Howlett 1992: 276) and thus policy making was a form of conflict resolution (Heclo 1974). Proponents of new institutionalism questioned the passivity of the state and started to look at the influence of bureaucrats and policy experts in directing state action. As explained by Berman:

“In contrast to the reigning theories in the field at the time, a group of scholars began arguing that the state and its affiliated political institutions were not merely a transmission belt for, or an instrument of, underlying socioeconomic forces, but instead could exert an independent impact on political outcomes” (Berman 2013: 218).

Scholars like Hall, argued that the state acts independently from “societal forces and conflicts” (Bennett and Howlett 1992), therefore, it is ideas rather than conflict that are central to contemporary theories of policy change (Heclo 1974). Hogan and Howlett (2014) write “... ideas are important, underlying processes of policy change and stability, and a key to appreciating patterns and processes of policy dynamics” (Hogan and Howlett 2014: 6).

Ideas are generated and formed through social learning. Hall defines social learning as:

“Learning is conventionally said to occur when individuals assimilate new information, including that based on experience, and apply it to their subsequent actions. Therefore, we can define social learning as a

deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information. Learning is indicated when policy changes as the result of such a process” (Hall 1993: 278).

For Hall, learning is demonstrable when behaviour (i.e. policy) has changed.

Other scholars offer a more nuanced view of social learning. For example, Pelling and High (2005) argue that social learning can also be gleaned from subtle internal changes:

“...that is, as humans, we can learn in relation to different modes of interacting with the world: emotional and conceptual as well as physical. Our learning corresponds to difference in the way that we act (consciously or unconsciously) within these modes, which in turn arise in response to our on going experience” (Pelling and High 2005: 6).

Social learning originated in the field of behavioural psychology and was advanced in the 1970s notably by Bandura (1971). One of the tenets of the theory is that learning is not only behavioural, but it is also a cognitive process that takes place within a social environment (Bandura 1971). It has been adapted by management theory to explain how organisations learn, which helps to illustrate how social learning may influence policy development within a government bureaucracy. Wenger (2000) explains that organisations learn when:

1. the social “competence” within communities of practice<sup>12</sup> (that is developed over time and required for membership into the community of practice) within an organisation starts to drift away from,
2. the personal “experience” of members within a community of practice.

As Wenger states, “whenever the two [competence and experience] are in close tension and either starts pulling the other, learning takes place” (ibid: 227).

Social learning theory is found in disaster management literature (O’Brien et al. 2010), and in the field of climate change adaptation (Pelling and High 2005; Pelling et al. 2008; O’Brien and O’Keefe 2013).

Returning to the policy change literature reviewed in this chapter, Hall states that the agents of social learning consists of governmental actors (notably senior bureaucrats and policy experts) and external influences such as political parties, and interest groups (Hall 1998). He also argues that there is a two-way

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<sup>12</sup> Wegner offers the following definition of communities of practice: “Since the beginning of history, human beings have formed communities that share cultural practices reflecting their collective learning: from a tribe around a cave fire, to a medieval guild... Participating in these ‘communities of practice’ is essential for our learning. It is at the very core of what makes us human beings capable of meaningful knowledge” (Wegner 2000: 229)

communication between “the state and society” (Hall 1998 in Bennett and Howlett 1992: 281) that also contributes to the formation of ideas. In the ACF framework that is discussed later, these actors can be state or non-state actors such as journalists, interest groups, or researchers who play a role in disseminating policy ideas (Sabatier 1998).

Hall disaggregates the processes leading to policy change into three subtypes: first, second, and third order change. Each order is resultant from the process of social learning (see Table 3-1).

*Table 3-1. Order of Policy Change*

Orders of Change	Hall's (1993: 278-279) Definition	Baumgartner (2013: 242) Definition
First	“...the process whereby instrument settings are changed in the light of experience and new knowledge, while the overall goals and instruments of policy remain the same, a process of first order change in policy” (Hall 1993: 278).	“...routine adjustments to known policy instruments,”
Second	“...when the instruments of policy as well as their settings are altered in response to past experience even though the overall goals of policy remain the same, might be said to reflect a process of second order change (Hall 1993: 279).	“changes in the policy instruments themselves used to achieve shared policy goals,”
Third	“...wholesale changes in policy occur relatively rarely, but when they do occur as a result of reflection on past experience, we can describe them as instances of third order changes” (Hall 1993: 279).	“shifts in the goals themselves”

(Sources: Hall 1993; Baumgartner 2013)

Baumgartner (2013) credits Hall with providing “an excellent understanding of why policies change so little most of the time but can sometimes change so dramatically” (Baumgartner 2013: 242). Accordingly, first and second order changes are more common than third order change; it is widely recognized in the literature that adjusting policy instruments is much easier than shifting whole agendas or goals (Hall 1993; Candel and Biesbroek 2016). Another key finding from the literature is that first and second order change is usually brought about solely by policy experts in that domain, whereas, “the involvement of broader social and political forces is needed for paradigmatic change” (Rayner 2014: 68; see also Berman 2013).

The rest of this discussion now examines some of the reasons given by Hall and the wider policy change literature as to why the process of third order change is so rarely achieved. A main catalyst behind creating the conditions for change is the degree to which the status quo is discredited (Hall 1993; Baumgartner 2013). Discretization may be a difficult feat to achieve since the dominant paradigm will work against such efforts. As Stewart argues:

“In the context of bureaucratic politics, a dominant paradigm underpins organisational power by forcing policy discourse into a particular frame, which privileges some values over others, and forces participants to ‘speak the same language’” (Stewart 2006: 191).

This is reminiscent of Picciotto’s earlier discussion in Chapter 2 of the politics of policy mainstreaming stirring up the “turmoil of the deep”. Policy change requires “a strong and convincing case to change such existing elements” (Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 215).

Another difficulty lies in the salience of past policies; “one of the principal factors affecting policy at time-1 is policy at time-0” (Hall 1993: 277). Candel and Biesbroek (2016) suggest this is a result of *locked in effect* resultant from *path dependency*. Locked-in effect is the result of policy makers rarely having a blank slate from which to develop new policies. In general, new policies are merely reformulations of past policies, which have the result of maintaining the same policy style and preventing policy innovation. Locked-in effect is caused by path dependency in that “past policy decisions act to circumscribe or foreclose parts of policy space” (Kay 2006: 29). This explains why the policy climate is typically conservative and risk averse (Candel and Biesbroek 2016); “the cost of reconfiguring public policies and domains in which they are embedded are enormous” (Biggs and Helms 2007: 540). All of this further perpetuates maintenance of the status quo.

Hall also suggests, “the movement from one paradigm to another is likely to be preceded by significant shifts in the locus of authority over policy” (Hall 1993: 280). He explains that politicians receive conflicting policy accounts from various experts on the matter. It is up to the politician to decide who among the policy experts has the most authority and there is likely to be competition between policy communities in order to gain the most influence. Finally, Hall states that “third order change is likely to involve the accumulation of abnormalities, experimentation with new forms of policy, and policy failures that precipitate a

shift in the locus of authority over policy and initiate a wider contest between competing paradigms” (Hall 1993: 280).

Hall’s social learning approach to policy change is relevant for several reasons. In contrast to the *evidence-based policy* agenda (discussed in Chapter 5 Methodology) that privileges quantitative analysis, Hall takes a decidedly constructivist stance in asserting the centrality of ideas and social learning to the policy change process. Additionally, Hall’s work encompasses a ‘state-structural’ approach (as opposed to ‘state-centric’) that accords external state influences—such as political parties and lobby groups—influence in paradigm policy change. As will be discussed in later chapters, Nepal’s governmental institutions operate heavily under the influence of outside interests- especially those of international donors.

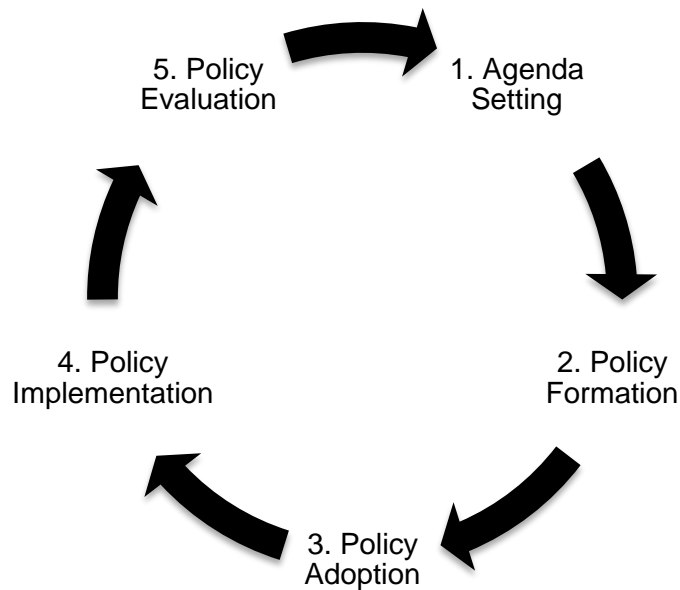
### **3.3.2 Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier: Advocacy Coalition Framework**

Another important contribution from the policy change literature is the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). It was originally developed by Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier as a “conceptually integrated” framework of the policy process (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993). It is discussed here because of its ability to visually capture the complexity and politics of the policy change process. It also provides a framework for sorting out the different actors within the disaster policy subsystem in Nepal.

The ACF addressed fundamental problems with the way the policy cycle was traditionally understood and analysed. The traditional conceptualisation of the policy cycle encompassed a circular set of policy stages that included: agenda setting, policy formation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation (Figure 3-2).

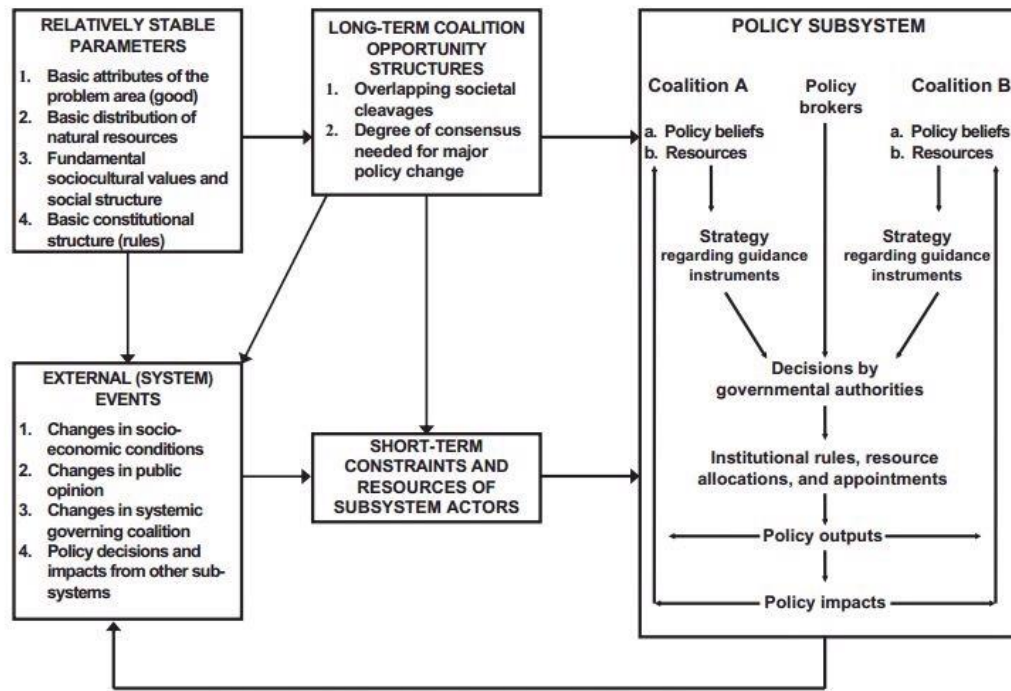


Figure 3-2. Traditional Policy Cycle



Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993) noted that this approach is over simplistic and does not indicate causality or address the forces that drive the policy process from one stage to the next. They critiqued its “built-in legalistic, top down focus”, which ignored the inputs that community level bureaucrats, and “restricted the view of ‘policy’ to a specific piece of legislation” (ibid: 177). Finally, they found that the “temporal unit of analysis is often inappropriate” (ibid: 177). Instead the ACF (Figure 3-3) contends that “policy evolution usually involves multiple, interacting cycles initiated by actors at different levels of government, as various formulations of problems and solutions are conceived, partially tested, and reformulated by a range of competing elites against a background of change in exogenous events and related policy areas” (ibid: 178). The framework captures the overall complexity of the policy environment and has been used as an analytical tool in several developing country contexts (see Marfo and Mckeown 2013; Villamor 2006; Henry et al. 2014).

Figure 3-3. Advocacy Coalition Framework.



2007 Advocacy Coalition Framework Flow Diagram

(source: Cairney 2007: Online)

An important feature of the ACF is the policy subsystem, which denotes the space in which groups of actors (represented as coalitions) compete for policy dominance. Most policy subsystems have a limited number of coalitions that can range in number from one to typically no more than four. Coalitions are formed through groups of actors who share similar and deeply held policy beliefs. Members in coalitions can range from government actors, policy experts, researchers, interest groups, or journalists. The policy subsystem is relatively stable. This is because most members within the coalition hold deep core beliefs that are hard to change (Fischer 2003). To this end, social learning generally does not occur within the coalition itself. Hall's third order policy change is typically generated when external shocks (i.e. oil crisis, war, banking collapse) shift public opinions and upend deep-core policy beliefs (Pelling and High 2005).

Binding coalitions together in the ACF are *policy brokers*. The policy brokers mediate between the competing coalitions and ultimately make the final decision on policy direction, thus policy brokers are typically members of the political or executive level of government. Their "dominant concern is with keeping the level

of political conflict within acceptable limits and with reaching some ‘reasonable’ solution to the problem” (Sabatier 1998: 141).

There are four premises that underpin the ACF model that are summarized in Table 3-2.

*Table 3-2. Advocacy Coalition Framework Premises*

Premise	Explanation
1. Policy change needs to be examined over a decade or more.	“The literature on policy implementation also points to the need for time frames of a decade or more, to complete at least one formulation/implementation/reformulation cycle and to obtain a reasonably accurate portrait of success and failure” (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993: 179).
2. The best way to analyse policy change over a long time span is through policy subsystems	Subsystems are, “those actors from a variety of public and private organisations who are actively concerned with a policy issue... and who regularly seek to influence public policy in that domain” (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993: 179).
3. Sub-systems must include an intergovernmental dimension.	“To examine policy change only at the national level will, in most instances, be seriously misleading. Policy innovations may occur first at a subnational level”. For example “American cities...had viable stationary air pollution source controls 20 years before any significant federal involvement” (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993: 179).
4. Public policies can be conceptualized as belief systems.	Public policies “involve value priorities, perceptions of important causal relationships, perceptions of the state of the world (including the magnitude of the problem), perceptions of the efficacy of policy instruments, etc.” (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993: 179).

	<p>There are three types of beliefs that influence policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Deep Core beliefs: underlying personal philosophy</li> <li>• Policy core beliefs: fundamental policy positions</li> <li>• Secondary aspects: these relate to funding, delivery and implementation of policy goals and the information gathered to support the process”</li> </ul>
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(Source: Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993; Cairney 2012)

The ACF provides several key components that are used in later chapters for the analysis of mainstreaming DRR in Nepal. In particular, its attention to *subsystems* within which competing coalitions struggle for policy dominance provides a conceptual frame of reference in order to identify the actors (e.g. the members within various *coalitions* and the *policy brokers*) who are involved in the disaster policy subsystem. Its intergovernmental emphasis prompts a policy analysis that considers also the role that local level actors can play in the policy process. Finally, its emphasis on the key role external shocks play in changing policy paradigms is also factored in to analysis<sup>13</sup>.

Building on Hall’s work, the ACF helps to visually represent the complexity of policy change. One weakness of the ACF is that it does not address the role that cross-sector integration/mainstreaming can play in changing policy. For that, this discussion now turns to the analytical framework created by Candel and Biesbroek (2016).

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<sup>13</sup> Because the earthquake occurred mid-way through the research process, it is considered as an external shock and its role in shifting the policy paradigm is later examined.

### **3.3.3 Candel and Biesbroek (2016): Policy Change and Integration**

The final piece of literature reviewed by Candel and Biesbroek's (2016) is both timely and useful because it unites the policy change and policy integration literatures. The authors have developed a heuristic tool to "synthesize fragmented accounts of policy integration into a single, more refined framework" (ibid: 224). In Chapter 2, during the discussion of EPI literature (particularly that of Underdal (1980) and his emphasis on both process and output) it was noted that "existing typologies have been mainly used to evaluate progress *toward* EPI ... rather than approaching integration as an inherently dynamic concept in itself" (ibid: 213). To remedy this, the authors take a decidedly processual approach to understanding the dynamics of policy integration as seen in their starting theoretical principles (Table 3-3). Their processual approach fits well with the sequential aspect of this research, since the data collection period was conducted while mainstreaming DRR was in process and had yet to be achieved. It ought to help clarify whether or not the Government of Nepal's usage of mainstreaming DRR is merely rhetoric or if it is a substantive policy agenda.

*Table 3-3. Theoretical Principles of Processual Framework of Policy Integration*

Starting Theoretical Principles	Explanation
“the dimensions of integration do not necessarily move in a concerted manner.”	“Virtually all integration processes will show differentiation in the advancing of dimensions, which may increase or decrease at various paces and even in opposite directions” (Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 215).
“integration is as much about positive (i.e. more integration) as it is about disintegration.”	The authors highlight several instances where integration had been occurring, but was discontinued for a variety of reasons including: Integration regime goes out of fashion. Other policies deemed more important. Integrative efforts had served their purpose. Friction between supporting actors and institutions. Collaborative fatigue. Political actors replace existing paradigms. Changes of government.
“mutual dependencies exist and interactions take place between dimensions.”	The authors propose two hypothesis related to this principle.  <i>Hypothesis One</i> echo’s Hall (1993): “...the advancement of policy goals and policy instruments toward enhanced or weakened policy integration is informed by and follows on shifts in the configuration of subsystems and associated prevalent cognitive and normative beliefs about the nature of the problem and its governance” (ibid: 216).  <i>Hypothesis Two</i> : “... whereas a change of dominant societal and political frames provides the opportunity for new subsystems to get involved in the governance of a particular cross-cutting issue, the reversed logic may also result in a change or adoption of beliefs.... Similarly, the success of a policy integration instrument may lead to fundamentally rethinking the dominant policy frame of (how to tackle) the cross cutting issue” (ibid: 216).
“policy integration should be considered a process of policy and institutional change and design in which actors play a pivotal role”.	“Agency-centered mechanisms help to explain why and how dimensions of integration change toward enhanced or weakened policy integration. The most notable agency-centred mechanisms of policy integration identified so far include

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well known mechanisms of social learning... coalition building... and policy entrepreneurship" (ibid 2016: 218).
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(Source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016)

The framework itself has four components: policy frame, subsystem involvement, policy goals and policy instruments. The authors use a basic and rough indicator approach to show the level of policy integration for each dimension (i.e. low  $\longleftrightarrow$  high policy integration). Each of the four dimensions are discussed in more detail below.

### **3.3.3.1 The Policy Frame**

A policy frame is commonly used in the policy literature to refer to how a particular policy problem is defined within a society. Candel and Biesbroek definition is narrower in that it is concerned with whether a specific policy problem is viewed as a cross-cutting problem within the governance system:

“In particular, this dimension is about whether a cross-cutting problem is recognized as such and, if so, to what extent it is thought to be requiring a holistic governance approach. Importantly, the policy frame here entails the problem definition and governance understanding that is dominant among the governance systems macro political venues and decision-makers” (ibid: 218).

The authors acknowledge that this cross-sector framing is embedded within a larger frame which may or may not engender support for such approaches. This larger frame is impacted by focusing events, policy entrepreneurship<sup>14</sup>, and whether the administrative culture is supportive of integrative approaches.

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<sup>14</sup> A policy entrepreneur is defined as, “[e]ntrepreneurs may be elected politicians, leaders of interest groups or merely unofficial spokespeople for particular causes. They are people with the knowledge, power, tenacity and luck to be able to exploit windows of opportunity and heightened levels of attention to policy problems to promote their ‘pet solutions’ to policymakers” (Cairney 2012: 271).

Figure 3-4. Manifestations of Policy Frame

Policy Frame				
	<div>Low integration ←————→ High integration</div>			
Policy Frame	<p>The problem is defined in narrow terms within the governance system; the cross cutting nature of the problem is not recognized and the problem is considered to fall within the boundaries of the specific subsystem. Efforts of other subsystems are not understood to be part of the governance of the problem. There is no push for integration.</p>	<p>There is awareness that the policy outputs of different subsystems shape policy outcomes as well as an emerging notion of externalities and do-no-harm. The problem is still predominately perceived of as falling within the boundaries of a particular subsystem. There is no strong push for integration</p>	<p>As a result of increasing awareness of the cross-cutting nature of the problem, an understanding that the governance of the problem should not be restricted to a single domain has emerged as well as associated notions of coordination and coherence.</p>	<p>General recognition that the problem is and should not solely be governed by subsystems, but by the governance system as a whole. Subsystems are desired to work according to a shared, 'holistic' approach, which is particularly recognized within procedural instruments that span subsystems (see Policy Instruments)</p>

(Source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016)

### 3.3.3.2 Subsystem Involvement

The next dimension is that of subsystem involvement. Echoing the ACF, “this dimension captures the range of actors and institutions involved in the governance of a particular cross-cutting policy problem” (ibid: 218). They use two determinants to assess subsystem involvement: the level of involvement and the density of interactions. Subsystem engagement “is thus determined by the extent to which subsystems consider a particular issue to be of their concern as well as the recognition of the issues cross-cutting nature and governance implications thereof” (ibid: 219). The second indicator of density of interactions is measured by the frequency and depth of subsystem interactions with each other.



Figure 3-5. Manifestations of Subsystem Involvement.

Subsystem Involvement				
	<div>Low integration ←————→ High integration</div>			
Subsystem Involvement	One dominant subsystem, which governs the issue independently. Formally, no other subsystems are involved, although they may be in terms of substantial, non-intentional policymaking	Subsystems recognize the failure of the dominant subsystem to manage the problem and externalities, which results in the emergence of concerns about the problem in one or more additional subsystems	Awareness of the problem's cross-cutting nature spreads across subsystems, as a result of which two or more subsystems have formal responsibility for dealing with the problem.	All possibly relevant subsystems have developed ideas about their role in the governance of the problem. The number of subsystems that are formally involved is equal to or higher than at previous manifestations, but complemented with a less engaged set of alternative subsystems
Density of Interactions	No interactions	Infrequent informal exchange with dominant subsystem	More regular and formal exchange of information and coordination, possibly through coordinative instruments at system-level	High level of interaction between formally involved subsystems, that maintain infrequent interactions with a less engaged set of subsystems.

(Source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 221)

### 3.3.3.3 Policy Goals

The authors define policy goal as “the explicit adoption of a specific concern within the policies and strategies of a governance system, including the subsystems, with the aim of addressing the concern” (ibid: 220). Policy goals are strongly shaped by the interests of those within the policy subsystem, and are often laden by path-dependency, “since once pursued, they attract a range of actors who commit various types of resources (‘sunk-costs’) to that end” (World

Bank and OECD 2013, Online). Ideally, the goal of DRR is found in a wide range of policies within various sectors. Also of importance is the level of coherence between the sector DRR policies. Candel and Biesbroek argue:

“Coherence can be achieved and measured within a policy domain, but for cross-cutting policy problems it is particularly relevant how the goals of various domains and associated subsystems relate to each other. In other words, coherence relates to whether a governance system’s policies contribute jointly to—or at least do not undermine—specific objectives” (ibid: 221).

*Figure 3-6. Manifestations of Policy Goals*

Policy Goals				
	<div>Low integration ←————→ High integration</div>			
Range of policies in which problem is embedded	Concerns only embedded within the goals of a dominant subsystem	Concerns adopted in policy goals of one or more additional subsystems	Possible further diversification across policy goals of additional subsystems	Concerns embedded within all potentially relevant policy goals
Policy coherence	Very low or no coherence. Occurs when cross-cutting nature is not recognized, or when subsystems are highly autonomous in setting (sectoral) goals	Because of the rising awareness of externalities and mutual concerns subsystems may address these to some extent in their goals	Coordinated sectoral goals, which are judged in the light of coherence. Subsystems attempt to develop synergies.	Shared policy goals embedded within an overarching strategy

(Source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 222)

### **3.3.3.4 Policy Instruments**

The fourth and final dimension is that of policy instruments. Policy instruments are tools used by governments to achieve chosen outcomes (Cairney 2015).

Here the authors consider the role of both substantive and procedural instruments within the overall governance and subsystems. Substantive instruments relate to ‘command and control’ type instruments such as grants, regulatory bodies, licences, etc. (Howlett 2000). On the other hand, procedural

instruments are used by governments to change particular behaviour or to “directly affect the nature, types, quantities and distribution of the goods and services provided in society” (Howlett 2000: 415).

Figure 3-7. Manifestations of Policy Instruments

Policy Instruments				
	<div>Low integration ←————→ High integration</div>			
Range of subsystems' policies that contain policy instruments	Problem only addressed by the substantive and/or procedural instruments of a dominant subsystem	As a result of increased awareness of externalities one or more additional subsystems (partially) adapt their instruments to mitigate negative effects	Possible further diversification of instruments addressing the problem across subsystems	Instruments embedded within all potentially relevant subsystems and associated policies
Procedural instruments at system-level	No relevant procedural instruments at system-level	Some procedural information sharing instruments at system-level	Increasing number of system-level procedural instruments that facilitate subsystems to jointly address the problem	Broad range of procedural instruments at system-level, including boundary-spanning structures that coordinate, steer and monitor subsystems' efforts
Consistency	No consistency. Sets of instruments are purely sectoral and result from processes of policy layering.	Subsystem consider externalities of sectoral instrument mixes in light of internal and inter-sectoral consistency	Subsystems seek to jointly address the problem by adjusting and attuning their instruments. Consistency becomes an explicit aim	Full reconsideration of subsystem instrument mixes, resulting in a comprehensive, cross-subsystem instrument mix that is designed to meet a set of coherent goals.

(Source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016)

Candel and Biesbroek's work aligns with this research through its emphasis on the processual aspect of integration and policy change. It serves as a basic measuring tool for assessing the progress level (with a scale of low to high) of the mechanisms of integration. It is unlikely to help explain *why* these mechanisms may be lacking in the Nepal context because this work focuses on the technical rather than political aspects of policy integration. This is a significant drawback but its deficit will be made up by incorporating the insights on why third order change is so rarely achieved from Hall and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's work. While this work is by no means perfect (the "manifestation" tables are not as functional nor as streamlined as they could be), it does represent the most contemporary policy integration framework found in the literature.

### **3.3.4 Disaster as a Focusing Event for Changing Paradigms**

Finally, since this research is about changing policy paradigms and the 2015 Nepal earthquake occurred during the data collection period, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the existing body of literature that examines disaster events as a mechanism of change. This was also discussed in the ACF that external shocks are key policy change. The idea of change through disaster/focal events comes from Baumgartner and Jones (1991, 1993) work on punctuated equilibriums and policy change. Although their work was not focused on disasters, the authors theorize why long periods of policy stability suddenly are punctuated by dramatic policy change (Jensen 2011). Similarly, a disaster is considered a focusing event that may serve as the proverbial 'window of opportunity' that Kingdon (1995) coined in relation to policy studies, but others have used in disaster specific research (Siriwardhana 2010; Birkmann et al. 2010; Manyena 2013).

For example, Manyena (2013) explores this in relation to DRR in Zimbabwe by assessing whether a cholera epidemic served as a 'window of opportunity' for Hyogo Framework for Action implementation. He concludes that the cholera disaster did not quicken HFA implementation and based his conclusions on practitioner/HFA considerations such as lack of legal and institutional frameworks, lack of resources, and limited political will.

Pelling and Dill (2010) offer a substantive discussion of disasters and political change. They discuss disasters as tipping-points, which they define as “critical historical moments or broader influences on systems (internal and external) that determine the direction and significance of change” (ibid: 22). Their work focuses on how disasters can instigate political regime changes, not policy change. They offer a framework for understanding tipping-points that uses social contract theory and the negotiation of rights in the post-disaster environment. The authors suggest that a disaster opens “political space for the contestation or concentration of political power and the underlying distributions of rights between citizens and citizens and the state” (ibid: 34). It is in the instances when rights are “claimed or denied” that act as a catalyst for change. Their application of social contract theory needs to be applied to more post-disaster contexts in order to evaluate its efficacy as a tool for analysis.

Whether the 2015 Nepal Earthquake is a window of opportunity for stimulating DRR advancement throughout the Government of Nepal remains to be seen and will be examined throughout Chapters 6-8. However, the existing body of literature on the subject, as well as the ACF, suggests that it might.

### **3.4 Chapter Summary**

Change is a theme that has permeated almost all aspects of this literature review beginning in Chapter 2 and continuing throughout this chapter. Here, it was found in the vulnerability literature, which highlighted how vulnerability to disasters is exacerbated under the current capitalist political and economic regimes. The response to the vulnerability literature was to reframe disasters as a development problem- hence DRR. This required a significant change in the disaster policy environment. However, change has been slow and extremely difficult to achieve. The vulnerability literature has been around for forty years, and yet still the dominant disaster policy remains disaster response and relief.

As seen in Chapter 2, real change can threaten the dominant economic and political orders. So the idea of change has been wrapped up in a rhetoric that suggests substantive change but actually is of little substance. That is why the second half of this chapter explored three key texts from the policy change literature. Because the idea of mainstreaming is unlikely to be useful as an analytic tool in the field, this chapter gained insights from the policy change

literature. There is now a much better sense of what significant third order change through mainstreaming DRR requires. This literature is synthesised in Table 3-4 and sets the theoretical, visual, and indicators that will be used for assessing fieldwork data.

*Table 3-4. Synthesis of Policy Paradigm Change Literature*

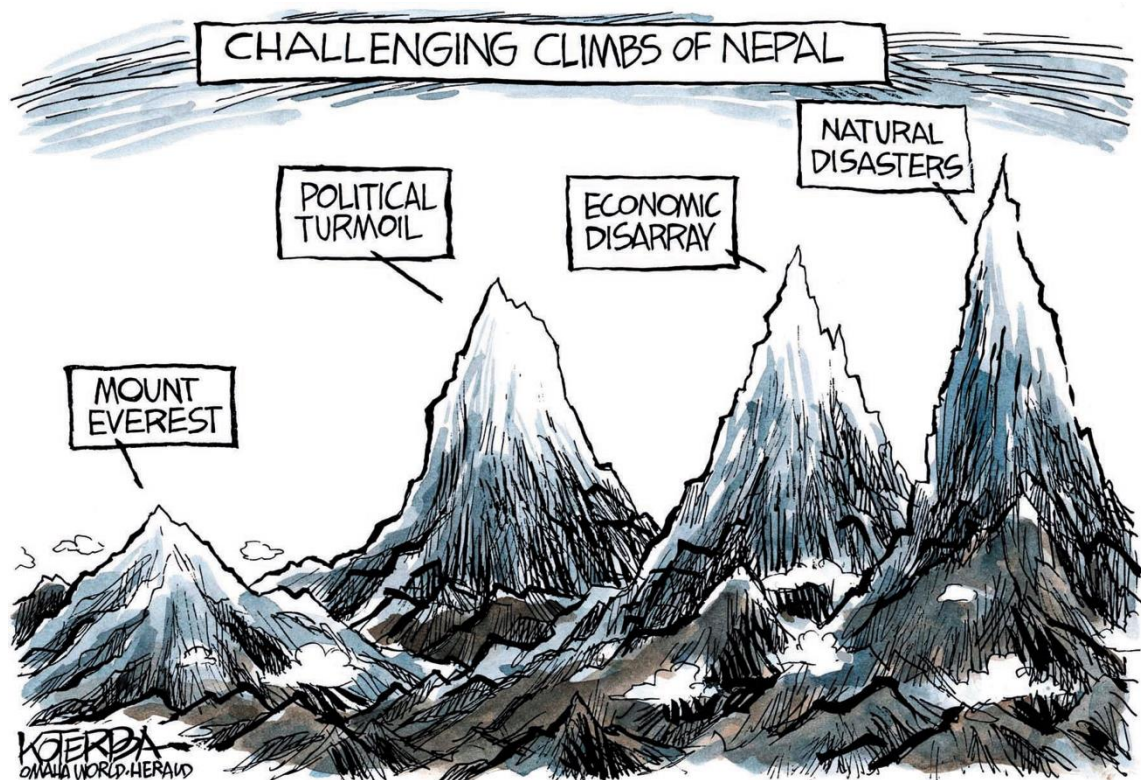
<p>Hall- Theory of Paradigm Policy Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Achieving mainstreaming DRR is a third order of change</li> <li>❖ Policy change through social learning theory</li> </ul>	<p>Key Guiding Principles from the Literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Policy change needs to be examined over a decade or more.</li> <li>❖ There is an intergovernmental dimension to policy change.</li> <li>❖ Policy integration does not happen in a concerted manner.</li> <li>❖ Individuals play a pivotal role in policy change.</li> </ul>
<p>ACF- Visual Representation of Policy Change Process During Fieldwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Policy subsystem</li> <li>❖ Coalitions in competition</li> <li>❖ All important policy brokers</li> <li>❖ External Shocks → Third order change</li> </ul>	
<p>Candel and Biesbroek Processual Indicators of Policy Integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Policy Frame</li> <li>❖ Policy Goals</li> <li>❖ Policy Instruments</li> <li>❖ Subsystem Involvement</li> </ul>	

The terminology from the frameworks and theories discussed in this chapter are used throughout the upcoming empirical chapters (Chapters 6-8). It is not until the final discussion chapter (Chapter 9) that the above theory and frameworks are used in full to pull the various strands of this research together and to provide a clearer picture of the mainstreaming DRR agenda in Nepal.

## 4 Nepal: Government, Politics, and Disasters

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Figure 4-1. Editorial Cartoon "Challenging Climbs of Nepal"



(Source: Koterba 2015 licensed for use)

### 4.1 Introduction

The above political cartoon, by American cartoonist Jeffrey Koterba, appeared shortly after the 2015 earthquake and depicts the seemingly insurmountable challenge of reconciling Nepal's political turmoil and economic disarray with its 'natural' disasters, all of which are greater than the highest mountain peak in the



world. This chapter follows suit and continues to interrogate the mainstreaming DRR agenda in Nepal. It reviews the challenges—focusing on Nepal's politics and government—that make integrating DRR difficult and that creates significant resistance to mainstreaming and policy change. This chapter also presents an overview of Nepal's hazards, geography, and briefly introduces the fieldwork locations.

The political situation in Nepal is complex and dynamic and over the three-and-a-half-year period of research many significant events occurred. In the process of researching policy mainstreaming Nepal experienced:

- four changes of government;
- a damaging earthquake on April 25th 2015 that killed approximately 9,000 people, and a subsequent aftershock that caused further damage on May 12th 2016;
- a highly contested Constitution that was passed by the Constituent Assembly in September 20th, 2015 after 8 years of political deadlock;
- from September 2015- February 2016, the Nepal-India border was blockaded. Goods were not allowed to enter Nepal causing significant shortages of food, medication, cooking fuel, petrol, and earthquake recovery supplies.

It is in this context of ever-present upheaval and change that this research is situated. This chapter begins with an overview of Nepal's geography and hazard profile. It next examines a few indicators of Nepal's current social, political and economic development. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overview of Nepal's government administration and discusses various modern government administrative challenges.

## **4.2 Geography and Hazards**

This section provides a brief discussion of Nepal's physical and political geography and its associated hazards. The Himalayan mountain range runs along Nepal's northern border and forms the backbone of Nepal's physical geography. Because of this, Nepal's altitude is one of extremes varying from 70 metres up to 8,848 metres. Its average north-south distance is 140 km, whereas, its east-west length is approximately 800 km. Nepal is divided into five physiographical regions: Tarai Plain, Chure Hills (also known as the Siwalik Hills), Hill, Middle Mountain, and High Mountain (Table 4-1). Each of these physiographical regions are represented across the three districts where fieldwork

took place (Bardiya, Lalitpur, Solukhumbu). Accordingly, each region has a varied and often fragile ecosystem. Although Nepal is a relatively small country, it has a diverse climatic conditions that range from tropical in the south Tarai region to alpine in the mid and high mountains (Dixit 2011: Online).

*Table 4-1. Physiographic Regions of Nepal*

Region	Elevations	Area	Geographic Setting	Field work Site
Tarai	<900m	33%	The Tarai region lies in the southernmost part of the country. Land slopes gently southward and supports most of the country's agriculture.	Bardiya District
Siwalik (Chure Hills)	900-1200m	8%	The Siwalik zone is located south of the middle mountain. It forms the first and lowermost ridges of the Himalayan Mountain system with cultivated valleys and plains.	Bardiya District
Middle Hills	1200-3000m	30%	The Middle Mountain area comprises the country's central belt. This region is composed of networks of ridges and incised valleys.	Lalitpur District
High Mountains	3000-5000m	20%	The High Mountains are characterized by a series of ridges and mountain tops which are dissected by deep valleys and gorges incised to elevations around 1000 m asl.	Solukhumbu District
High Himalayas	>5000m	9%	The High Himalaya from Nepal's highest peaks and is largely covered by snow and ice throughout the year.	Solukhumbu District

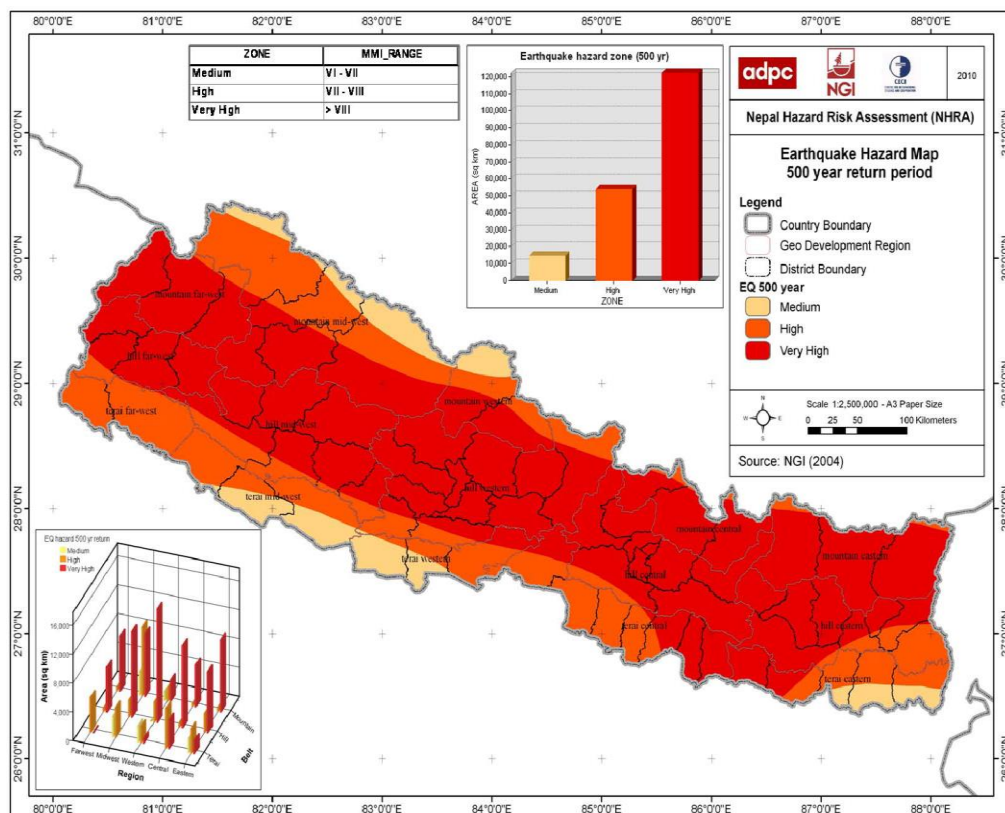
(Source: adapted from Bricker et al. 2014)

#### **4.2.1 Hazards**

Nepal's geophysical context contributes to its ranking as one of the most hazard prone nation-states on the earth. Nepal ranked 11<sup>th</sup> for earthquake risk and 30<sup>th</sup> for flood risk in a UNDP (2004) report. Table 4-2 outlines a list of the hazards that the Government of Nepal has identified in each region. This section selectively elaborates on only a few of these hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, and floods (riverine and glacial lake outburst floods).

The Himalayas are considered geologically to be a young mountain range (dating from 55,000 years ago) and therefore the rock is weaker and prone to erosion and landslide events (Gallessich 2003: Online). The processes that contribute to the formation of the Himalayas are also the tectonic forces that create the risk of earthquakes. Figure 4-2 illustrates the area at risk from an earthquake with a 500-year return period. Notice that the majority of Nepal is at very high or high risk.

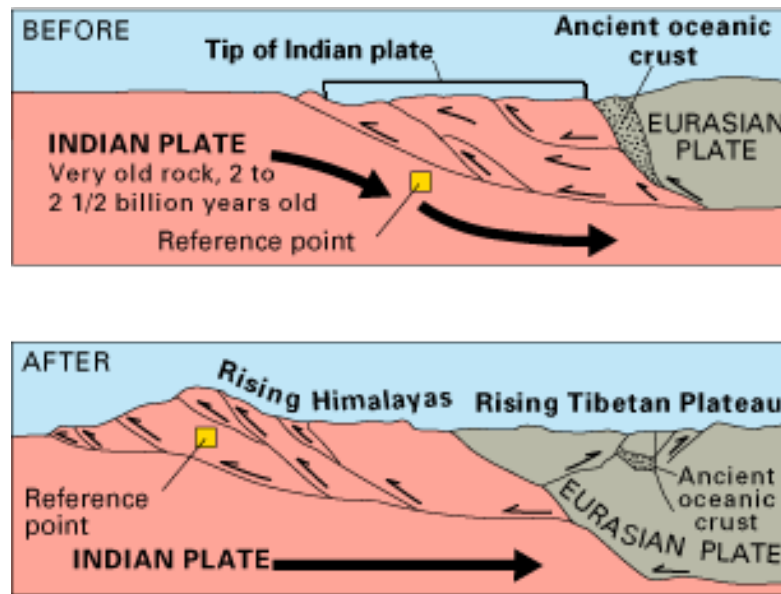
*Figure 4-2. Nepal Earthquake Hazard Risk 500 Year Return*



(Source: ADPC 2010: 33)

As mentioned earlier, Nepal is situated between the political borders of China and India and located on top of their geologic crustal plates. As the Indian plate moves northward it subducts under the Eurasian Plate (China) that is moving southwards.

Figure 4-3. Plate Tectonics and Himalayan Uplift



(Source: USGS 2014: Online)

As the Indian Plate subducts under the Eurasian plate, it carries the Eurasian plate backwards. This causes the upper Eurasian plate to buckle, which has the effect of 'growing' the Himalayan Mountains at an annual rate of approximately two centimetres (Oskin 2015). When parts of the plates become 'unlocked' the resulting earthquake inevitably causes the Himalayans to lose altitude as the Eurasian plate rebounds forward. For instance, after the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, the Himalayans dropped approximately 0.7-1.5 meters as the pressure between the plates was released (Oskin 2015).

From a hazards perspective events that take place at higher altitudes can have significant consequences at lower ones. The Himalayas create the headwaters for the primary rivers that flow south through the low-lying Tarai region tributaries of the Ganges in Northern India. For example, as a result of intense rainfall a landslide occurred in 2014 in the hill/mountain region of Sindhupalchok district. The landslide (often referred to as the Juri landslide) flowed across the Sunkoshi river creating a new lake and dam. A secondary hazard was created and it was feared that a break in the dam would have severe consequences on downstream Tarai communities and beyond into India. This was remediated by the GON by the construction of channels and controlled blasts to reduce the water pressure behind the dam.

Landslides are a frequent and deadly hazard in Nepal, particularly during the monsoon season that lasts from June-September. Landslides can be triggered by other hazards such as an earthquake or heavy rainfall. or they can be triggered by development activities such as deforestation and rudimentary road construction.

*Table 4-2. Government of Nepal Hazard List*

Types of Hazards	Affected Region
Earthquake	All of Nepal is a high-hazard earthquake zone
Flood	Tarai, Middle Hills
Landslide and landslide dam breaks	Hills, Mountains
Debris Flow	Hills and Mountain,
Glacier Lake Outburst	Mountains and Hills
Floods	
Avalanche	Higher Mountains
Fire (forest)	Hills and Tarai (forest belt of Siwalik Hills)
Drought	All over country
Windstorms	All over country
Hailstorms	Hills
Lightening	All over country
Epidemics	All over country
Fire (settlements)	All over country
Accidents	Urban areas, along road network
Industrial/Technological Hazards	Urban/industrial areas
Soil Erosion	Hills

(Source: GON 2015: 6)

Another hazard found in Nepal's mountainous region is increased water volumes in the glacial lakes from glacial melt. The glaciers are retreating at a rapid rate of 30 m/year (Karki et. al 2009). The increased water is putting more pressure on existing moraine-lake dams and at times causing them to burst, an event known as glacial lake outburst flooding (GLOF). The consequence of a

glacier lake outburst has devastating effects on downstream communities as there are no early warning systems in place.

Flooding is a hazard that is experienced most frequently in the Tarai region. The four largest rivers in Nepal (Mahakli, Karnali, Gandak and Kosi) account for two thirds of the 224 000 million cubic meters of run-off (Paisley 2002). Flooding has a particular cross-border political dynamic with India. As a consequence, Nepal's water resources and flood hazards are highly influenced by India. For example, in 1954 the two governments signed the *Kosi Agreement*. The Kosi river runs north to south, originating in Nepal's eastern mountains and flowing into Bihar State in India. The Kosi barrage, located on the Nepal-Indian border is shown in Figure 4-4. Paisley explains the Kosi Agreement:

“The primary purpose of the Kosi Agreement is to enable India to build control structures in Nepal that provide flood control to Bihar State in India. The Kosi Development Project that out of the Kosi Agreement was planned, designed and constructed by India” (Paisley 2000: 292).

The Kosi Agreement also highlights the disparity that exists within Nepal-India relations and environmental management. Paisley further elaborates:

“The Kosi Agreement has had a mixed reception in Nepal. On the one hand, it confirms Nepal's right to substantial future developments in the Kosi River basin, even though Nepal is yet to exercise those rights. On the other hand, it has been suggested that Nepal may have so far derived relatively little benefit from the agreement. More specifically, it has been suggested that the expected benefits to Nepal from the Chatra canal have not materialised, and the westward shifting of the Kosi has damaged land and agricultural crops in the Sapatari district of Nepal. Also the promised powerhouse of 20 megawatt capacity using the canal head could not be made operational” (Paisley 2000: 292).

*Figure 4-4. Kosi Barrage at Nepal-India Border*



(Source: the author)

#### **4.2.1.1 Climate Change**

It is widely agreed that Nepal is disproportionately experiencing the effects of a warming climate (Karki et al. 2009; International Panel on Climate Change 2014) despite contributing very little greenhouse gas emissions because of its low level of industrial development (Devokta et al. 2011). Climate change is intensifying the frequency and magnitude of hydrologic disasters and adversely affecting agricultural production (Devokta et al. 2011; Krishnamurthy et al. 2013). For instance, climate change is speeding up the glacial melt in the high mountains, causing increased flood risk at lower levels. Additionally, climate change is changing the annual monsoon patterns. Rainfall during the monsoon is becoming increasingly erratic with heavier and shorter rainfall durations. The ground is unable to absorb rainfall at such intensity which is resulting in catastrophic flooding.

#### **4.2.1.2 Hazards Bias**

Finally, it is important to note that the way hazards are prioritized in Nepal is itself a construction of the prevailing global political economy. Research conducted by Aryal (2012) in Nepal concludes that “small scale, local disasters have a greater cumulative impact in terms of causalities than large-scale,

national disasters” (Aryal 2012: 147). To determine this, Aryal conducted a review of Nepali newspaper reports of disasters between the dates of 1900-2005. This is important because it reveals the bias that exists within Nepal that tends to privilege the large-scale, urban, and sudden impact hazards like earthquakes. This bias is linked with and perpetuated by the prevailing global disaster response/relief industry that was discussed in Chapter 2. The off-shoot of this a resulting bias towards urban infrastructure risk reduction strategies. The 2015 earthquake also revealed a bias in the way hazards are planned for. What was anticipated was large urban destruction in the Kathmandu Valley. However, the earthquake resulted in a mostly rural disaster that the GON was woefully unprepared to respond to.

#### 4.2.2 Introducing the Fieldwork Sites: Solukhumbu, Lalitpur, Bardiya Districts

Figure 4-5 shows the districts of Nepal with the three fieldwork locations

*Figure 4-5. District Map of Nepal*



(Source: GON 2015a)

Solukhumbu is a district that encompassed both the high mountain and high Himalayan regions of Nepal. It has a population of 105,886 (Central Bureau of



Statistics 2011a). Solukhumbu's northern boundary borders Tibet/China. Mount Everest lies in the northern half of the district with the district headquarters, Salleri is located in the southern half at a relatively low altitude of 2207m.

*Figure 4-6. Salleri, Solukhumbu District*



(Source : the author)

Solukhumbu is a rural district. In 2014, the district headquarter, Salleri-VDC, was amalgamated with two other neighbouring VDCs to create a municipality. At the time of fieldwork, the municipality was still in the planning stages. The district had not experienced a large district-wide disaster in recent memory, although through interviews it was clear that smaller disasters (e.g. fire, landslides) frequently impacted local communities. Very few INGOs/NGOs had DM/DRR interventions there. The 2015 earthquakes caused extensive damage to the western region of Solukhumbu district. The NGO ACTED, estimates that 40% of the population had their houses destroyed by the earthquake (ACTED 2015). The earthquake also caused a large avalanche on Mount Everest resulting in 18 deaths and 71 injuries.

The second fieldwork site is located within Kathmandu Valley. Lalitpur district is the most developed of the three fieldwork sites and has a population of 468 132 (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011b). Within its jurisdiction is a mix of Village

Development Committees (many of which were in the process of amalgamation to become municipalities) and Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal's third largest municipality (pop. 220,802). The district is at-risk from a variety of hazards that included earthquake, flooding, forest and settlement fires, and landslides.

*Figure 4-7. Vulnerable Building in LSMC Shored Prior to Earthquake*



(Source: the author)

Of the three districts, Lalitpur experienced the most damage and loss of life from the 2015 earthquakes. In total, the earthquake damaged 25,508 private structures (17,444 fully damaged and 9054 partially damaged) (Housing Recovery and Reconstruction Platform 2016: Online).

Finally, Bardiya district is located in the south-western Tarai region of Nepal. Its southern boundary borders India. Total district population is comparable with Lalitpur District at 426,576 (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011c). The district headquarters is located in Gulariya Municipality (pop. 11,220) (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011c). The majority of Bardiya is flat Tarai jungle/plains with the Siwalik/Chure Hills forming along its northern border. Located in the district is Bardiya National Park, the largest protected area on the Tarai encompassing an area of 968 km<sup>2</sup>.

*Figure 4-8. Bardiya National Park*



(Source: the author)

Bardiya has many hazards, including flooding, wild animal attacks, settlement fires and earthquakes. The district was not affected by the 2015 earthquake. However, in August 2014 three days of intense monsoon rains resulted in widespread flooding throughout most of Bardiya and neighbouring districts. A report on the recovery described the flood event in these words:

“In 24 hours, nearly 500mm of rain fell across the plain and foothills. Rivers rose rapidly in the middle of the night. Flooding was perhaps a one-in-thousand-year event and exceeded the previous largest flood by nearly a meter. Downstream flooding was intense. Floodwaters flowed over banks, broke embankments, and flooded irrigation canals. Floodwaters came from unexpected directions, inundating previously safe areas and taking residents by surprise” (MacClune et al. 2015: 4).

Fieldwork took place in March 2015 and temporary camps were still in use by those who had lost their homes from the 2014 floods (see Figure 4-9).

*Figure 4-9. Temporary Camp for 2014 Karnali Flood Survivors*



(Source: the author)

#### **4.2.3 Nepal's Political Geography**

Nepal is a landlocked country that shares borders with Tibet and China in the mountainous north and India in its low lying and fertile plains to the south. Its close proximity to two large and developing economic powers, effects Nepal's political identity and makes the impoverished nation-state intrinsically valuable to global powers like the US (Khadka 2000). As Bell writes, contemporary Kathmandu "is a nest of spies" (Bell 2014: 359).

India in particular has a strong influence on Nepal's culture and politics. Like India, the majority of Nepali people are Hindu<sup>15</sup>. India's involvement in Nepal's political machinations are long standing and barely hidden. A superb example of Indian influence was witnessed over the period of study. On September 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 Nepal signed its Constitution that was enacted after eight years of political deadlock. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs made it clear that the Indian government was unhappy with the Constitution passed (Ojha 2015) and

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<sup>15</sup> According to the last census conducted in Nepal in 2011, a majority of people are Hindu- Hindu 81.3%, Buddhist 9%, Muslim 4.4%, Kirant 3.1%, Christian 1.4% (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011d: 4).

publically suggested seven reforms be made (Kumar 2015). In Kathmandu, this sparked outward hostility towards what was perceived as India's meddling in Nepali affairs. Nepal's strongly nationalistic Prime Minister of the time, K.P. Oli, leveraged the negative public opinion, further escalating tensions between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Constitution angered many who live along the Nepal-India open border who felt it did not entrench their right for "political and economic representation in proportion to their population" (Khalid 2016: Online). The Madhesis, are an ethnic group that makes up one third of Nepal's population but are underrepresented in centralised decision-making venues. The open border between India and Nepal means that there is a cultural transfusion generated by cross border marriages, travel, education and work (Upreti 2008). The Madhesis in particular share many common cultural traits with their Indian neighbours, which has always been viewed with suspicion by the Kathmandu elite (Bell 2015; Khalid 2016). In response to the Constitution, the Madhesis and other southern ethnic groups protested.

These protests cumulated into a four month 'unofficial' border blockade along the Nepal-India border. The border blockade caused significant shortages of essential goods like petrol, medicines, food, and materials needed for earthquake recovery. India is widely believed to be behind the blockade, thus aligning its support for the Madhesis protests (Plesch 2015). While India has denied outright responsibility for the blockade, it did stop all truckloads from the Indian Oil Corporation and took no actions to alleviate border tensions. The reasons for this are speculative but they seem likely to revolve around India's strategic and security interests. One analysis suggests that India's involvement in Tarai politics is rooted in minimizing China's influence.

"Indian foreign policy is strategically in favour of developing Terai-Madhes as an 'inner buffer' as it believes that the Himalayas have been penetrated by China through the proposed rail links from Lhasa to Kathmandu and its 'One Belt One Road' strategy.... India's focus is to protect its core constituency within Nepal, the Terai-Madhes region, by developing a pro-Indian province in Nepal (Karki 2015: Online).

The blockade resulted in both human right violations—as the GON used undue force to quell protesters (Human Rights Watch 2015)—and international law violation since the Indian Government prohibited essential trade to landlocked



Nepal (Pandey 2015). In spite of their diplomatic presence in Nepal, the international community was mostly silent on the matter, which is indicative of Nepal's minimal geo-political/economic importance in the global order. This example is illustrative of many on-going tensions both with India and with Nepal's domestic politics. It also highlights the extent of Nepal's economic reliance on India. India is Nepal's largest trading partner. In 2013-2014, Nepal's exports to India were 605 million USD, whereas, India's imports into Nepal were valued at 4.81 billion USD (Ministry of External Affairs 2015: Online). Also, Indian firms are the largest contributors of foreign direct investment in Nepal, accounting for 38.3% of all investments (ibid: Online).

### **4.3 Social and Infrastructure Development Indicators**

Nepal has a population of 28.1 million (UNDP HDI 2015). It is a least developed country (LDC), with a Human Development Index (HDI- 0.548) ranking 149 out of 188 countries. Nepali society is socially stratified through its adherence to Hindu notions of caste. When inequality factors are taken into account Nepal's HDI score drops by 26.8% per cent to 0.401 (UNDP 2015). This is one marker that demonstrates the role that inequality plays in preventing human development progress. It is important to understand that Nepal is not a homogenous society, despite 250 years of attempting to create a centralized and unified state. Nepal is a "multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious" (Serchan 2012: 87). For example, there are 123 different languages spoken throughout Nepal.

Daily life is a struggle for most. The 2015 Human Development Index puts the percentage of working poor (at PPP \$2 USD a day) at 49.5%. Whereas, 23.7% are living below the income poverty line (\$1.25 USD a day). When this level of poverty is compounded with the effects of a disaster on livelihoods and basic infrastructure, the results are grim news stories of the 2015 earthquake survivors who died from winter exposure (Shrestha 2016) and vulnerable children being trafficked because of the loss of their families (Jones 2015).

Just under sixty per cent of the overall adult population are literate. This average belies the large gap in literacy among males and females. Male literacy is 71.6% and female literacy is 44.5% (GON 2012). The education sector is one HDI component that has made gains. In 1981, the adult literacy rate was 23%

(Mathema 2007). However, access to education and quality of education remain problems (Bhatta 2008; Ghimire 2015). Nepal first developed a New Education System Plan in 1971, which was the first time in Nepal's history that education was made widely available (Bhatta 2008). There is a belief in education being available to all (Bhatta 2008). However, many students drop out in the primary grades for a variety of reasons which may include malnutrition and lack of potable water making it hard for students to concentrate, families unable to afford school fees, children needing to work at home, etc. The quality of state education students receive is also poor as indicated by the 50 to 70% failure rates in compulsory School Leaving Certificate exams (Bhatta 2008).

In rural areas poverty is acute. The rate of poverty in rural communities jumps considerably from the 23.7% national average. In the less developed western regions of the country, the poverty rates stand at 45% and 46% (International Fund for Agricultural Development 2016). Agriculture and subsistence agriculture accounts for 76% of total household livelihoods (note that only 52% of agricultural households are literate) (Central Bureau of Statistics 2012). Approximately 70% of farm households have land holdings of less than 1 hectare "and many depend on plots that are too small to meet their subsistence requirements (International Fund for Agricultural Development 2016). The majority of farming is done using basic equipment. Only 1% of farm households own a tractor or power tiller and most do not use improved high-yield seeds (Central Bureau of Statistics 2012). Agriculture accounts for over one third of Nepal's GDP.

Another important contemporary factor that has shaped Nepal's social political and economic sphere are the number of young people who have left Nepal to find work elsewhere, and contribute to Nepal households by sending remittances. In 2014, 520,000 labour permits were issued for Nepali's who planned to work abroad (International Labour Organisation 2016). The World Bank estimates that remittances made up 32.2% of Nepal's GDP in 2015. The large outmigration of young and able-bodied men and women in the 20 to 40-year age range has significant political implications, as they are absent and unlikely to vote in elections. As stated by the International Labour Organisation, the migrant worker phenomena have created some unique vulnerabilities:

"Nepali migrant workers make an enormous development contribution to their home country but also to the destination countries where they fill

labour market niches by doing jobs that nationals are unable or unwilling to fill. But their contributions do not lessen their vulnerability to labour exploitation and abuse. Studies of recruitment processes and working conditions for low-skilled migrants consistently reveal indicators of abuse commonly associated with exploitation including forced labour and trafficking” (International Labour Organisation 2016: Online).

Pattisson (2016) reported that at least forty-four Nepali migrants died during the summer of 2014 while working in Qatar. The fact that so many Nepali people are forced to leave their country for work, only to be exploited and abused abroad, is both a reflection of the compliancy of a host of actors (e.g. multinational corporations, governments, manpower agents) when it comes to labour under the current neoliberal economies (Pattisson 2016) and a reflection of the dire conditions in Nepal.

One example of Nepal’s undeveloped physical infrastructure is its road system. Nepal is a country where distance is sometimes still measured by hours of walking on foot rather than drive times and kilometres (Campbell 2010). Many places in the difficult terrain of the hills and mountains, remain isolated and only accessible by foot, disconnected from broader transport and economic networks. The majority of rural roads constructed are basic “low technology” rural roads (Petley et al. 2007: 37). Providing access to rural and isolated communities has been actively pursued with donor money such as the Asian Development Bank. In 1985, the total road length in Nepal was 6000 km (World Bank 2013) whereas, by 2015 the road length stands at over 80,000 km (Himalayan Times 2015). In 2006, fourteen district headquarters (out of seventy-five) had no direct access by roads. By 2013, this number had been reduced to two district headquarters (GON 2013). Haphazard road building is resulting in increased slope instability and landslides (Petley et al. 2007) especially in fragile hill/mountain districts. In 2014 the previously mentioned Juri landslide destroyed five kilometres of the Araniko Highway and created an artificial dam across a tributary of the Koshi River resulting in a risk of potentially catastrophic flooding downstream<sup>16</sup>. The construction of roads is providing better access to government centres and services and markets; however, due to the haphazard nature of road construction, roads are also contributing to the increased risk of landslides.

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<sup>16</sup> For most riverine systems in Nepal, ‘downstream’ includes Northern India.



Table 4-3. Nepal's Development Indicators

Indicator	Source	
General		
Population	28.1 million (total)	UNDP HDI 2015
GDP growth (annual 5%)	5.4% (2014) 3.4% (2015)	World Bank Poverty Data 2016
GNI per capita (USD)	\$730 2015	
GON Budget Allocation 2014/15	Rs 495,185,306,000	GON 2014b
Foreign Grants/Loans 2014/15	Grant- Rs 73,385,924,000 Loan- Rs 49,528,770,000	GON 2014b
% of seats held by women in parliament	29.5 %	UNDP HDI 2015
Corruption	Ranked 131 out of 168 and given a score of 27/100	Transparency International
Urban Population- 2015	18.6%	UNDP HDI 2015
Internet users (% of population)	15.4 %	UNDP HDI 2015
Health		
Life Expectancy at Birth	69.6 years 71.1 (females) 68.2 (males)	UNDP HDI 2015
Public Health Expenditure (% of GDP)	6%	UNDP HDI 2015
Education		
Adult literacy rate	57.4%	UNDP HDI 2015
Public Education Expenditure (% of GDP)	4.7 %	UNDP HDI 2015
Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older)	17.7% (female) 38.2 (male)	UNDP HDI 2015

(Source: various- indicated in table)

All of the above indicators of Nepal's extremely low development ought to be considered with disaster vulnerability in mind. The following quotation is especially relevant in light of the poverty and inequalities experienced in Nepal:

"Vulnerable populations are those most at-risk, not simply because they are exposed to a hazard, but as a result of a marginality that makes of their life a 'permanent emergency'" (Bankoff 2001: 25).

In light of the social indicators discussed above, it is clear that in contemporary Nepal many people are in a state of 'permanent emergency' that exacerbates their vulnerability to disasters.

It is hard to reconcile Nepal's poor development status when it is the recipient of approximately one billion USD in annual foreign assistance (Bell 2014). Nepal's poor ranking on the corruption index by Transparency International of 131 helps to clarify this conundrum (Table 4-3). Nepal's public institutions are marred by an extractive culture of corruption and rent-seeking, which is fuelled by donor money. As Bell (2014) writes:

“The defining characteristic and *raison d’être* of the political economy are the practice of patronage for the purpose of resource extraction: through the sale of offices and political favours, bureaucratic graft, commissions on public contracts, lucrative but unproductive donor programmes, politically protected business cartels, or any other opportunity for rent seeking” (Bell 2014: 338).

Corruption is widespread in all facets of Nepali government administration (e.g. political party, bureaucracy). Corruption is a significant issue in regard to mainstreaming DRR for several reasons: as long as it is widespread and entrenched in government processes it remains a barrier for changing policies and sparking innovation, and it robs the community of funding that could be invested in disaster risk reduction.

Corruption’s impact on Nepal society was best illustrated over the course of this research by the case of load-shedding in Kathmandu Valley, although examples can easily be drawn from other sectors such as education or health. Kathmandu valley residents, businesses and tourists were accustomed to living without power for up to fifteen hours a day. Hotels and those who could afford it would keep the lights on through generators, solar power, and power inverters. The public was told that electricity had to be rationed because there was not enough in the grid. Instead, officials at the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) were receiving “bribes to allow industries to have dedicated feeders... power started going to those who paid, and load-shedding got much worse” (Shrestha 2016: Online). Recent reforms to cut out the systemic corruption has resulted in the resumption of twenty-four hours of electricity to homes in Kathmandu Valley. Credit for this has been given to Kulman Ghising, the newly politically appointed head of the NEA. As explained in a Nepali Times exposé on the issue:

“Kulman Ghising was appointed by the former guerrilla leader of the Maoist-Centre, Janardan Sharma, when he became Minister for Energy in the present coalition. Sharma has the green light from Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal to remove load shedding to show performance and improve the party’s credibility. Sharma has publicly accused the previous management of NEA of “leaking” electricity, and even set up a committee to investigate it” (Shrestha 2016: Online).

As seen in the above quote, the dismantling of NEA’s corruption required the backing of the Prime Minister (Maoist) who viewed it as a way to build public support for his party, while serving as Prime Minister with a limited term in a coalition government. According to the Nepali Times, Ghising’s action of ending the practice of ‘leaking electricity’ has disturbed a ‘hornet’s nest.’ In this case, NEA trade union bosses are pushing for Ghising’s removal now that their

funding source and those of their political affiliates (in Nepal, trade unions are extensions of political parties) have been dismantled. This illustrates the difficult and possibly dangerous task that individual's face in dismantling the systemic corruption that pervades Nepalese institutions. It also illustrates the challenge of changing policy when elites are profiting from the status quo. In this case, the country's capital region went without electricity in order for political elites to profit.

It is safe to say that the root of Nepal's poor developmental performance is linked with its weak and corrupt governance. Unfortunately, the historical roots of this can be traced right back to Nepal's unification in 1768, which means it is extremely difficult culture to change. This is examined in the next section.

## **4.4 Nepal's Bureaucracy and Administration**

This section outlines the government's administrative structure and seeks to better understand why Nepal's governmental institutions are not dealing with the pressing social, environmental, and economic concerns discussed in the above section. This section begins with Nepal's state founding in 1768 and ends with a discussion of modern administration in Nepal and the challenges present.

### **4.4.1 Unification and Shah Rule 1768-1846**

Nepal's unification into the state it is known as today, with centralized administration, begins with Prithvi Narayan Shah's invasion of Kathmandu Valley in 1768 AD. Prior to this, the territory that now makes up Nepal's political borders was divided into many separate kingdoms. Prithvi was the ruling king of Gorkha, a hill kingdom lacking in wealth and power. Prior to the invasion, Kathmandu Valley was divided into three kingdoms (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) each ruled by a Newari Malla king. The valley was strategically located on the primary trade route between India, Tibet and China<sup>17</sup>; the existing three kingdoms had consequently grown into the wealthiest kingdoms in the region (Shakya 2013).

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<sup>17</sup> A treaty established in the 17th century created a monopoly for this route as the only trade route to be used for trade into Tibet.

After conquering Kathmandu Valley, Prithvi declared Kathmandu to be the capital of his empire (Shakya 2013). As a ruler, he faced little opposition from the majority Newar population of Kathmandu Valley. His expansionist agenda had created new trade opportunities for the Newari people who continued to profit under their Gorkha ruler (Shakya 2013). Prithvi then set his sights on controlling the three ancient kingdoms of the Tarai region (Makwanpur, Vijaypur, and Chaudandi), a resource rich area that borders India. He accomplished this by 1774 AD.

Hailed a nationalist hero, Prithvi united distinct geographical territories under one centralized feudal system of administration. However, this dominant historical narrative of nationalism is a contested one. Prithvi did not rule over a homogenous population, instead he unified territories with a “diversity of language, cultures, traditions, and ethnic characteristics” (Shrestha 2005:122). By establishing Kathmandu as the capital, giving preference to hill high-caste members, and by subjugating ancient Tarai kingdoms, Prithvi set in motion the skewed power imbalances between the central and periphery regions of Nepal that continue to cause tension to this day.

It is from this period of unifying conquest that the seeds and legacy of Nepal’s administration were established. Prithvi died before he could fully establish governing institutions, but in the process of conquest he established the foundations of a centralised bureaucracy. An autocratic ruler, he believed that the king was the best administer of justice (Shakya 2013). His concern to keep British colonizers out of Nepal, led to an administrative culture of protectionism and isolationism (Shakya 2013). Prithvi reinforced the Hindu notions of caste<sup>18</sup>. The primary mechanism of governing was through land allocation. As stated previously, the majority of agricultural households have only a small plot of land to farm. The reason for this lies in Nepal’s history of land ownership. Table 4-4 outlines the different components of the land granting system called the *pajani* system. All land rights were conferred by the state (the state being synonymous with the king); land was the state’s ‘primary asset’ (Shakya 2013). In the absence of a strong cash based economy, land was used as payment for

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<sup>18</sup> The earliest record of Nepal’s caste system dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century Kathmandu Valley, which outlined a Newari Malla king’s determination of rank, hierarch and tasks for sixty-four different groups (Bennett et al. 2008:1). The caste system was a labour allocation system.

military and state services. All members of the upper class and close associates of the king were beholden to him in order to obtain a land grant (Shakya 2013). As such, there was no long-term security for those with land grants, their access to the land could be revoked if they did not raise enough revenue.

*Table 4-4. Traditional System of Land Granting*

Scheme	Definition	Strengths/Weakness
Pajani System	Pre-dating Prithvi, the pajani was a system for appointing government officials. An annual ceremony was held to appoint or dismiss officials based on how well their land grant was performing (revenues) and based on their loyalty to the king.	Put all control in the king's hands. King often neglected to follow the rules as stated.
Birtas	Land grants given by king to individuals (titled <i>Birtawal's</i> ) who retained rights to earn income from taxes and administrative fees. Individuals could be granted land in exchange for troops and materials for expanding empire	Effective way of renting out state owned land and productivity.
Jagir	Short term land grants given to individuals (titled <i>Jagirdar's</i> ) for military service in lieu of cash salaries.	Kept the states expansionism continuing while running government at deficit. Solved the states weak cash economy, and kept land in productivity.
Guthi	Land grants given to temples and monasteries.	
Rakam	Land grants given to craftsmen and skilled labour in lieu of cash	

(Source: the author, adapted from Shakya 2013)

Prithvi's early reliance on land grants was not only unsustainable in the long run, it also established the roots of many problems found in the modern bureaucracy. The *pajani* system fostered a competitive environment amongst the nobility, "lacking any guarantee of continued rights to the land, nobles preferred to wage war or attend at court to impress the king, rather than develop a viable political relationship with the population and their territories" (Shakya 2013: 16).

Motivation for the nobility to improve productivity of their land was also weakened through the caste system. Higher castes members of the nobility, like Brahmin and Chhettri, left work—outside of religious activities or military

service—to those of lower castes (Shakya 2013) as work was considered unseemly. This is considered the root of why rent-seeking behaviour is common in Nepal's contemporary administrative culture, "[t]he pattern of elite members of society showing an aversion to work, remaining content with doing nothing other than collecting rent and being socially praised for such inactivity, is what I call here rent-seeking mentality" (Shakya 2013: 17).

In addition to creating competition between the nobility, the systems of land granting outlined in Table 4-4 created a skewed relationship between the landless subjects and the state. The *pajani* system was effectively a mechanism designed to exert control over the people, it was not used to serve them (Asia Foundation 2012: 66). Those given land grants (the *Birtawal* and *Jagirdar*) became the intermediary rulers between the state and the peasantry and to increase profits they exploited the peasantry through taxation (Shakya 2013). Since most *Birtawal* and *Jagirdar*'s spent most of their time next to the king in Kathmandu and not on their lands, the peasants had little direct access to voice their concerns to the state.

Prithvi and his successive Shah rulers were unable to institutionalise strong governance or sound economic policies. The state's land based economy soon eroded and the Shah king empire eventually failed after wars with China in 1792 and against the British East India Company, which led to the loss of large tracts of arable lands (Shakya 2013). In only a brief discussion, the origin of Nepal's current political and administrative dysfunction is found. The caste system certainly played a big role in promoting inequality, as did the establishment of the capital in Kathmandu, the conquest of ancient territories, the highly centralised administrative culture, competitiveness between elites vying for the king's attention, and a culture of valuing land over all other assets are all the legacy of Prithvi.

#### **4.4.2 The Ranas: 1846-1951**

After the failure of the expansionist Shah empire, a brief period of political manoeuvring and backstabbing occurred until Jung Bahadur Kunwar outdid them all in 1846 by orchestrating a massacre of fifty prominent members of the nobility and military class. Jung took power as a Prime Minister, maintained the royal family for symbolic purposes but removed all their powers, and gave

himself the surname of 'Rana'. This established a century of Rana family dynastic rule. During this era, very few strides were made to modernize the bureaucracy or Nepal society. Jung maintained the *pajani* system as a way to privilege his family and those close to him. In order to maintain control over the people, the Ranas maintained an isolationist stance to keep outside influences from challenging/changing the mind-set of the people they controlled. To this end they also limited school attendance. This had an offshoot effect of Nepal students from higher income families attending school in India. It was from these children the seeds of rebellion against the Ranas would grow. The Nepali Congress party (see Chapter 8) was formed in India and was a product of the displaced and disenfranchised.

Another aspect of Rana rule, was their Kathmandu centric focus. To this day the Rana legacy can be seen throughout Kathmandu in the large palaces constructed by the Rana's. Singha Durbar (Figure 4-10), the compound where most Ministry offices are located, was once a grandiose 1000 room Rana palace. The consequence of this was an alienation from the rest of the country. As Shakya explains:

“The Ranas also focused on amassing personal wealth and assets in Kathmandu Valley, thereby alienating themselves from the rest of Nepal, as Nepal and Kathmandu became synonymous. The people outside Kathmandu Valley referred to Kathmandu as Nepal and this perception of a Kathmandu-centric Nepal would not change for decades to come” (Shakya 2013:27).

Both the Shahs and the Ranas exploited Nepal for their own benefit and provided very little in the way of government services. The bureaucracy only existed to serve the rulers, and was itself an institution occupied by the elite. Whelpton states the bureaucracy was comprised “of the elite group of perhaps 200 families which monopolized government employment under the Ranas” (Whelpton 2005: 81). It was this cronyism and their opulent lifestyle at the expense of Nepal's development that led to the end of the Rana dynasty in the early 1950s.

#### **4.4.3 The Birth of Political Parties and the Partyless Panchayat System**

The intellectual seeds that led to the peaceful Rana overthrow were sown mainly through the formation of the Nepali Congress Party in India. Because of the

poor education system in Nepal, wealthy children were sent to India for their education. Here they mingled with Nepali dissidents who were exiled by the Rana autocracy. Students and dissidents alike witnessed Ghandi's protest movement and the work of the Indian Congress. Eventually coalescing with the existing monarchy in Nepal, and with support of the Indian Government (Whelpton 2005), the factions pushed the Rana dynasty from power and restored Nepal's hereditary monarchy (King Tribhuvan) to power. It was to be a constitutional monarchy, in order to prevent the autocracy of previous regimes.

The 1950s were marked in Nepal with an uneasy relationship existing between the newly developing political parties and the monarchy. The next significant public administration development occurs in the 1960s. King Mahendra, father of King Birendra (who later died in the 2001 royal massacre), implemented the Partyless Panchayat System (PPS) in 1960 (formally in 1962 when a new constitution was enacted). The rhetoric was that the PPS would decentralise power and foster development. The reality was that it was an attempt by the king to regain absolute control through the abolishment of the political parties and controlling who gained power in the PPS.

Assemblies were established from the local to the central/national level, which gave the illusion of decentralisation and a democratic polity. Village or town councils were directly elected. From this pool of elected members, their members "formed an electoral college to choose district-level representatives" (Whelpton 2005: 101). A majority of the national legislature (*Rastriya Panchayat*) was selected from amongst the district councils, with some seats kept free for representatives of royal nominees:

"The Rastriya Panchayat's powers were limited and the whole arrangement was designed to allow an element of popular represent while the king ruled unhindered by the pressures of parliamentary democracy' (ibid 2005: 101).

Nepal was divided into 14 zones with each zone divided into 75 districts. Within the district were village and town panchayats (approximately 30 per district). Each village or town was subdivided into 9 wards. Mayors and ward chairmen were directly elected (Bienen et al. 1990). The PPS system was dominated by 'traditional elites' who came to that stature through land ownership. There was little opportunity or space for public participation. According to Bienen et al. (1990), the rural elites were not cohesive and factionalism was strong but the



factionalism was not created from ideology. Rather, the factions were created by allying with “local patrons whose land constitutes the single most important work opportunity” (ibid: 63). Patronage and private networks funnelled most of the funds earmarked for development away from the community and into the pockets of elites. National Assembly members also operated on a system of patronage and maintained affiliations with local factions:

“From countryside to Kathmandu, then, politics under the Partyless Panchayat System is characterized by battles among elite factions for control over government resources” (Bienen et al.1990: 64).

Cooperation at all levels of government was limited as there was no political ideology that galvanized cohesion within the bureaucracy or politicians, allowing the King to fill that role. Although the King set the broad policy objectives, he was unlikely to interfere in the bureaucracy or engage in dispute with elites because his rule largely depended on their support (Bienen et al. 1990).

In February 1990, the outlawed political party's joint forces and led a massive protest movement call the *Jana Andolan'* (Peoples Movement), a non-violent movement aimed to restore multiparty democracy. The protest movement eventually led to two hundred thousand protestors marching through the streets of Kathmandu. By April 1990, the King removed the ban on political parties. Both the overthrow of the Ranas in 1950 and the Jana Andolan movement characterise the struggle of the democracy movement in Nepal- one big step forward followed by several steps backwards, but the forward momentum has thus far been maintained.

A series of events, in particular the Maoist led civil war (1996-2006), curtailed Nepal's administrative, social, and economic development. Jones et. al. (2014) argue that the civil war was instigated due to a democratic deficit. Peace was brokered through the signing of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In the same year, massive public demonstrations put an end to the monarchy, making Nepal a republic. The protests were another indication that Nepali people wanted accountable and democratic intuitions and government. One of the demands was for a Constitution that would enshrine the rights of the people. A constitution would not be passed until September 2015, almost five months after the April 2015 earthquake. As previously discussed, many in Nepal (not only the Madhesis people) consider the 2015 Constitution to not have embraced the spirit of the 2006 demonstrations.

## 4.5 Modern Administrative Structure

As per the 2015 Constitution, Nepal's federalist structure will eventually be divided into seven provinces. However, the structures discussed below are the structures that were in place over the course of this research. There are three main administrative levels: central, district, and the local level which includes both Village Development Committees and municipalities. Nepali government administrators are using the same administrative divisions that have been in place since the Panchayat period.

### 4.5.1 Central Level Administration

The central level bureaucracy is overseen by elected Cabinet members. At the time of writing, there are 41 Cabinet posts overseen by an elected political member. In the course of this research, the government has changed four times. When this research commenced there were only 27 ministries. Ministry posts are used to broker political alliances in coalition governments (Table 4-5).

*Table 4-5. Political Party Control of Ministries 2014*

Party	Ministry
Nepali Congress	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
	Ministry of Finance
	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
	Ministry of Information and Communications
	Ministry of Urban Development
	Ministry of Law
	Ministry of Education
	Ministry of Irrigation
	Ministry of Physical Planning and Construction
	State Ministry for Labour
CPN-UML	Ministry of Home Affairs
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Ministry of Energy
	Ministry of Youth and Sports
	Ministry of Agriculture Development
	Ministry of General Administration
	Ministry of Commerce and Industries
	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
	Ministry of Health and Population
	Ministry of Land Reforms and Management
Others	Science, Technology and Environment

Party	Ministry
	Peace and Reconstruction
	Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation
	Women, Children and Social Affairs
	Commerce and Supplies
	Defence
	Labour and Employment

(Source: Nepali Times, 2014)

The majority of Ministry HQs are located within a gated compound called Singha Durbar located in Kathmandu. As noted previously, Singha Durbar is a site of a former Rana palace. At its centre is a thousand-room palace that now housed the Prime Minister's Office and the National Planning Commission (Figure 4-10). The 2015 earthquake had rendered the palace uninhabitable, meaning the PMO and NPC offices were relocated into other buildings in the compound. The lack of space this created seemed to be pressurizing staff. Around the former palace were newer constructed buildings which housed the central offices of the Ministries of Energy, Environment, MOFALD, MOHA, Education, etc. Gaining access into Singha Durbar required an official meeting request to be sent to the main gate by the ministry official and a passport/id check. Its imposing walls and armed security seemed to reinforce the idea that the central government was out of reach for the ordinary Nepali. It contrasted severely with the district

*Figure 4-10. Former Rana Palace in Singha Durbar*



(Source: D. Sapkota)

headquarters, which are more accessible. Many central ministries (e.g. health, energy, irrigation, agriculture) have departments that deliver services at the district and local levels. The central level also plays a key role in district and local administration. The absence of local elections, the District Development Committee, municipal and Village Development Committees are overseen by appointed central government bureaucrats from the Ministry of Local Affairs and Federal Development. The District Administration Office is overseen by a centrally appointed bureaucrat appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The central level appointees are expected to perform both the role of senior administrator and stand in for the political representatives who are absent due to the lack of elections.

#### **4.5.1.1 Senior Government Positions and Ministry Organisation**

The top bureaucratic post in the Ministry is the Secretary, who is supported by Joint-Secretaries, who are then supported by the Under Secretaries. Below those positions, the staffing and organisation chart was unique to each Ministry.

#### **4.5.1.2 Political Parties**

There are 178 registered political parties in Nepal (Election Commission of Nepal 2013). The three main parties, which have each held government power over the course of this research through various coalition governments, are the Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxists Leninists), and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre). Political parties are described in more detail in Chapter 8.

#### **4.5.1.3 Constituent Assembly (CA)**

Since there were no local and district elections at the time of this field work, the Constituent Assembly<sup>19</sup> (CA) represented the only legitimate political institution by which political parties were elected by the people to govern on their behalf. The first CA was formed in 2008 after the decade long Maoist insurgency. Its establishment was a prerequisite of the *12 Point Understanding between 7 Political Parties and the Maoists* (GON 2005), which ended the war. In total fifty-five political parties sought representation in the CA and twenty-five parties won seats (Bhattarai and Budd 2008). The CA was intended as an interim parliamentary assembly charged with drafting a Constitution that would organize “the form of the state and establish the domains or boundaries in which state power may manifest itself” (Williams 2015: 247). Furthered through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2006<sup>20</sup>, Nepal became a federal republic thereby abolishing the monarchy that had existed for 240 years.

The Maoists won 220 seats to form the government in the 2008 election, the Nepali Congress won 110 and the CPN-UML won 103 (Bhattarai and Budd 2008). The election resulted in the most representative government in Nepal's history (Shneiderman and Tillin 2015) yet still favoured elite male high caste

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<sup>19</sup> The CA has 601 seats to be filled through a complicated electoral procedure of directly elected first past the post (240 members), proportional representation (335 members) and 26 Cabinet appointed members. In order to form a majority government 301 seats must be gained.

<sup>20</sup> Article 3.4 of the CPA reads: “To pursue a political system that fully complies with the universally accepted fundamental human rights, competitive multiparty democratic system, sovereignty inherent in the people and the supremacy of the people, constitutional check and balance, rule of law, social justice and equality, independent judiciary, periodic elections, monitoring by civil society, complete press freedom, people's right to information, transparency and accountability in the activities of political parties, people's participation and the concepts of impartial, competent, and fair administration” (Government of Nepal 2006).

members, calling its legitimacy to formulate a Constitution into question<sup>21</sup> (Williams 2015). The legacy from the first CA was remarkable only for its display of internal and external party division and conflict. As Snellinger writes:

“By the time the multi-party democratic republic was instituted in 2006, the different political parties had their own political rhetoric, practices, and traditions that were not necessarily informed by the liberal democratic values that undergird deliberation and consensus or voting as a quantitative alternative” (Snellinger 2015: 233).

Given a two-year mandate to formulate a Constitution and after a series of extensions the CA was dissolved in 2012 having failed to produce a consensus based Constitution.

The next election for the second CA was held November 19, 2013. With high voter turnout of 78% (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2016) the public expressed their frustration at the Maoist government’s inability to draft a Constitution. The Nepali Congress and the United Marxist Leninists won 196 seats and 175 seats respectively and formed a coalition government. The Maoists became the official opposition with 80 seats (a significant loss of 149 seats). The NC split governing with the CPN-UML by divvying up ten ministries each to oversee. After some political wrangling over which party would control the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Prime Minister (Nepali Congress) made the formal announcement of Cabinet Ministers on February 25, 2014. Since the election in 2013 until the time of writing, various permutations of coalition governments have governed. The current government is run by the Maoist-Centre party in coalition with the Nepali Congress.

#### **4.5.2 Government Administration, Mainstreaming DRR and Caste**

Here, the discussion briefly considers the implications of the caste system for the mainstreaming DRR policy agenda. Earlier in this chapter, it was found that the caste system has a long history in Nepal. From a public administration perspective, caste encouraged a stratified and hierarchical division of labour. Caste is a component of the Hindu religion; although not all people living in Nepal are Hindu, all citizens—regardless of religion—are categorized according to caste.

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<sup>21</sup> “The constituent power is the generating force that gives rise to the characteristics of the constitutional order” (Williams 2015: 247).

“...everyone was organized in terms of their relative ritual purity into the four broad *varnas* of the classical Hindu caste system: The Brahman priests, the Kshatriya kings and warriors, the Vaisya traders and businessmen and the Sudra peasants and labourers—with an additional group technically “outside” the caste system because of their ritually defiling occupations which rendered them “untouchable” by others” (Bennett et al. 2008: 1).

Although caste is found in Kathmandu Valley as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in 1854 the Ranas centralized and further codified caste in the National Code or *Muluki Ain* (Bennett et al. 2008). This was an attempt by the Kathmandu elite to unify Nepal’s caste system and to protect their own status as high caste members. The reality of caste incorporation throughout Nepal is not homogeneous. Caste in Nepal is incredibly nuanced and complex owing to Nepal’s ethnic diversity and the rural remoteness of much of its geography (see Levine 1987 for a discussion of caste on Humla district populations). In 1962, the GON made both the caste system and any discriminatory practice illegal. That said, caste remains pervasive in Nepali culture and occurrences of caste-based discrimination are common (Al Jazeera 2014; My Republica 2016).

The problem that the caste system poses for mainstreaming DRR lies in the hierarchical and discriminatory culture that ensues from such a social system, which is incompatible with the ethos of both mainstreaming and DRR. Subedi (2010), in reference to an essay written by C. Bouglé, lists three primary principles of caste:

1. “Hereditary Specialization: the hereditary association of caste and specific trade or profession.
2. Hierarchy: Personal status, as rights and duties, is unequally divided and determined by the rank of the group to which one belongs.
3. Repulsion: The phenomena of mutual repulsion between social groups, division into opposed fragments, isolation on the group level and mechanism to prevent alliances and relations across the group boundary like endogamy pollution concepts and food taboos” (Subedi 2010: 143).

These principles are most clearly demonstrated by the over-representation of high caste members in the modern bureaucracy. It is easy to see the historical trajectory of this phenomenon. Previously, it was noted that early into Nepal’s centralized state history, high caste members such as the Brahmin or Chhetri soon became disdainful of productive work, unless it aligned with work associated with their respective caste (e.g. priests, military) (Shakya 2013).

These high caste members were also close to the king, and thus served as bureaucrats and oversaw substantial tracks of land granted to them by the king (ibid 2013). In modern Nepal, high caste members continue to dominate the bureaucracy. Jamil and Dangal (2009) found the higher castes of Brahmin and Chhetri make up 74% of the bureaucracy despite the fact that they encompass only 29% of the population.

That lower castes are poorly represented throughout the bureaucracy is one of many significant barriers for mainstreaming DRR. Inequality is found to play a significant role in lowering Nepal's Human Development Index and is a significant contributor to disaster vulnerability. As argued in Chapters 2 and 3, mainstreaming is intended to stimulate significant policy change. It is unlikely that significant social and development reforms—that challenge the status quo—will be realized when high caste members dominate the government administration.

#### **4.5.3 District Level Administration**

The district and local level administration is established by the Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) enacted in 1999. The LSGA sets out the governance arrangements at district and local levels and is considered progressive and fit for purpose. However, the absence of elections at the district and local levels negates much of the decentralised aspect of the legislation, since elected councils do not exist and are necessary to fulfil the legislative requirements set out in the Act.

At present, there are 75 districts in Nepal (see Figure 4-5). Each district has a district headquarters that is administered by two offices: District Administrative Office and the District Development Office.

- The District Administrative Office is overseen by the Chief District Officer (CDO) who is appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is the CDO who is responsible for the Nepal Police and for the administration of birth, marriage, death certificates, passport applications, etc. The CDO wields a lot of influence and power in the district.
- The second office in the district is the District Development Office which is overseen by the Local Development Officer (LDO). The LDO is appointed by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Government. This office oversees and coordinate all development work in the district. They approve or refuse the development plans that come from the Village



Development Committees and formulate annual district development plans.

- Also working in the districts are the ministry line departments (e.g. agriculture, women, children and social development, health, energy). These are in theory coordinated by the Local Development Officer.

#### **4.5.4 Municipal and Village Level Administration**

At the local level are the Village Development Committees (VDC) and the Municipalities. The LSGA (1999) also establishes the parameters of VDC and municipal governance. As well, the LSGA mandates the requirement of participatory and bottom-up annual and five-year planning. There are 3,157 Village Development Committees and 217 municipalities<sup>22</sup> in Nepal. However, most of these municipalities were newly designated in 2015 and involved amalgamating several VDCs together. At minimum, a municipality has to have a population of at least 20,000 (or 10,000 in hilly areas) and electricity, roads, drinking water and communication facilities.

- Each municipality is overseen by an Executive Officer, who is a central government appointee from the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. Because of the absence of local elections, the Executive Officer serves as both Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer. Each municipality creates an annual development plan. Unlike the VDCs the municipal plans go direct to MOFALD for approval.
- Each VDC is overseen by the Village Development Secretary who is appointed by MOFALD.

As stated earlier, the local administration in Nepal is particularly rife with corruption. Yet it is apparent that the GON has put mechanisms in place to try to reduce corruption and make the local level more responsive to community needs. For example, a significant portion of the funding for local bodies comes from central level grants overseen by MOFALD (Asia Foundation 2012). Each local body receives an “initial grant equal to 35 per cent of their total allocation under the development budget” (ibid: 61). The rest of the grants are allocated based on how well the local body has met the minimum conditions and performance criteria (MCPM) set out by the Ministry. The MCPM is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. The best performing local bodies receive an additional 30 per cent over their original allocation, while the worst performers forfeit 20 per cent. In 2009/2010, 17 District Development Committees and 28 municipalities failed to meet MC/PM criteria, and forfeited portions of their allocations (ibid: 62).

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<sup>22</sup> At the start of this research there were only 58 municipalities.

Another example can be found in the 14-step planning process all local institutions need to follow to determine their annual planning. Among other things, the 14-step planning process is intended to give marginalised local community members greater say into development agendas, and stimulate integrated planning.

## **4.6 Chapter Summary**

One of the main objectives of this research is to examine the rhetoric and reality of mainstreaming DRR throughout the Government of Nepal. This chapter has provided a glimpse of the political, environmental, economic and social reality of contemporary Nepal. In doing so, many significant barriers are found that may impede the Government's attempt to mainstream DRR. One barrier that stood out is that of corruption, which is so rampant and commonplace that for many years it left Kathmandu Valley residents without electricity each day. Corruption in the civil service is not a new phenomenon. It has long been an established part of Nepal's public administration, which means that changing this culture will not happen overnight. What corruption signifies for this research is that policy and behaviour change is made more difficult in the Nepal context. Because mainstreaming DRR is about changing the policy environment it is very likely that there are those within the GON who will resist change, especially when that change involves reallocation of funding. There are many significant barriers for policy paradigm change, but a few others found in this chapter are listed below:

- The political economy of Nepal-India relationship regarding cross-border flooding. India's past influence in water management and flood control in Nepal has prioritized India's hydro-electric needs over Nepal's need for risk reduction and environmental management.
- The hazard bias that privileges large scale and urban disasters over the more frequent and cumulatively more damaging local/rural hazards.
- Nepal's low social development indicators demonstrates that DRR is only one of a myriad of development priorities to be implemented by the GON.
- Absence of district and local elections means that there is very little public accountability at the lower levels of administration.
- Long tradition within the public administration of centralised and highly competitive ministries working in isolation from each other. The cultural component of caste and the overrepresentation of high caste members in the government is unlikely to promote change. This culture is not conducive to the cross-sector approach of mainstreaming.

The current reality of Nepal is that it is in a continual state of flux as it attempts to shake off centuries of centralised and autocratic rule and reform itself into a stable democracy- stable being a key word. There are many significant geopolitical, political, social, and economic obstacles that were discussed throughout the chapter that threaten to destabilise Nepal's efforts to develop and democratise. Of particular concern to this research are the destabilising effects of hazards and disasters on Nepal's progress. Nepal's dynamic and diverse geography means that Nepal is at-risk from many hazards (e.g. earthquakes, landslides, flooding). Additionally, climatic hazards in Nepal are being intensified by climate change. To this end, disaster risk reduction policy and implementation ought to be a key developmental priority for the Government of Nepal.

Having discussed the reality of the current state of Nepali public administration, it adds a new dimension to the rhetoric of mainstreaming DRR as a policy prescription. The next three chapters explore the dynamics of mainstreaming DRR throughout the GON.

# 5 Research Methodology

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines, describes, and justifies the research process used in constructing this thesis. By doing so, it highlights some of the key methodological concerns with undertaking qualitative fieldwork research of this nature. It starts with a discussion of the philosophical approach taken, then outlines the choice of methods, describes the process of data collection and analysis, and concludes with a reflection on the methodological approaches taken.

## 5.2 Philosophical Considerations

The foundation of the research process begins with a reflection of what is the reality of the social world and how knowledge is created within it. It is widely accepted that conventional research falls into one of two research traditions- either an objectivist position that favours quantitative approaches or a constructivist position that favours qualitative approaches. In the context of this thesis this dichotomy is particularly problematic because it has entrenched research camps and discouraged the necessary interdisciplinary work required to better understand wicked problems such as DRR and climate change<sup>23</sup> (Lach

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<sup>23</sup> Lach argues, “[a]s many have pointed out, there is increasing recognition that most, if not all, environmental issues are interdependent with social issues, which has led to increasing calls for and funding that brings together different disciplines in multi-, inter-, and/or trans-disciplinary research. Yet, the concepts and methods we bring to these efforts are primarily rooted in the disciplines that shape the way we think about the world

2014; Holland 2014). With that in mind, the goal of this section is not to promote one paradigm over the other. In disaster risk studies, both objectivism and constructivism are meritorious and necessary for understanding the complexity underlying the field (Hilhorst 2003). Instead, the aim of this section is to justify the philosophical approach taken based on what best served the research aims and objectives (see Chapter 1).

Nonetheless, the reason it is important to dwell on philosophical considerations is because the type of knowledge produced may be appropriated to further political and economic agendas. This can have significant implications at a policy/practice level where this research is situated. Providing much needed attention to disaster risk philosophical considerations, Chipangura et al. expands on this point:

“Holding a particular world view in disaster risk, influences one’s personal behaviour, professional practice, and ultimately the position one takes with regard to policy responses. Understanding how disaster risk knowledge is produced is therefore not only part of a particular theory and methodology, but it contributes to a clearer vision of disaster risk as a field of study ... In developing countries, where disaster risk science and management is often imported from developed countries, the conceptual underpinnings of disaster risk reduction could be misinterpreted or misused. This would imply that from the very onset policy arrangements and instrumental systems that flow from these underpinnings could also be flawed and unfit for their intended purpose” (Chipangura et al. 2016: 262-263).

Bringing attention back to the philosophical, there is a long-standing bias for research and subsequent policy that is generated from an objectivist tradition. This is further elaborated in the next section on objectivism.

### **5.2.1 A Critique of Objectivism and Quantitative Research Traditions**

Objectivism (closely aligned with realism, naturalism, positivism) believes in an objective and independent ‘real world’ (Moses and Knutsen 2012). For an objectivist, reality is a world with defined structures and things that have governed relationships with each other. People are able to know this reality through observation using the senses. Knowledge is generated through repeated and accumulated ‘systematic observations’ so that regularities can be documented and accumulated (Moses and Knutsen 2012). With enough

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and how we conduct research, making these interdisciplinary enterprises challenging and often frustrating” (2014: 88).

regularity, knowledge eventually becomes law. Objectivism aspires for a value-neutral (Gomm 2009) research process that has a hierarchy of quantitative research methods. Objectivism is the philosophical basis of the traditional sciences. In the field of disaster risks this includes hazard focused disciplines such as seismology, meteorology, hydrology, volcanology, etc.

Objectivism has also been influential in the social sciences. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the French founder of sociology, Comte, believed that knowledge about the social world could be gained through the application of scientific research method principles. This required that the same governing and observable structures and laws that exist in the natural world to be present in the social world. In the post-war era of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, objectivist approaches came to dominate particularly the fields of economics and political science. The term political science, more widely used in North America, is indicative of the fields long standing desire to be ‘scientific’, evidence-based, and predictive.

It is important to reflect on the extent that objectivist research preferences have held sway in contemporary policymaking. Valued by proponents for being impartial, removed from special interests and bias (Elgert 2009), an objectivist policy tradition is enmeshed within post-New Public Management (see Chapter 2). For instance, Kisby (2011) outlines the UK’s evocation of a post-NPM approach in the form of ‘New Labour’<sup>24</sup> and its push for *evidence-based policy making* (EBPM). Kisby quotes the former UK Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett:

“We’re not interested in worthless correlations based on small samples from which it is impossible to draw generalizable conclusions. We welcome studies which combine large scale, quantitative information on effect sizes which allow us to generalise” (Blunkett 2000 in Kisby 2011: 109).

There is no faulting a drive for policy to be informed by science/evidence rather than based on guesswork (Kisby 2011). However, many authors question the objectivist assertion that *evidence-based policy* (EBP) is value-neutral and free from bias (Kisby 2011; Elgert 2009). They argue that EBP is in fact a “co-production and thus embedded in, and reflective of power relationships at various levels. Often to the advantage of the powerful within these

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<sup>24</sup> The New Labour movement’s promised *third way* promoted by the UK’s Blair Government is widely recognised as a post-NPM construct. “Critics claim, however, that the *third way*, and the emphasis on partnership particularly, amounts to little more than a rhetorical cloak for the continuation of neoliberal policy by other means” (Entwistle et al. 2007: 1569).

relationships...” (Elgert 2009: 376). A consequence of EBP has led to the rise of ‘the technocrat,’ a phenomenon that is widely acknowledged as having depoliticised the public policy process (Bourdieu 2002; Flinders and Wood 2014). The term technocrat “implies an authoritative elite that possess expert positivist knowledge...” (Wilson 2006: 502). Under NPM, governments ‘outsource’ policy making to elites/experts, which removes policy agenda setting away from deliberative and democratic processes (Landwehr 2009). Some authors argue that in the context of global development, depoliticized and technocratic policymaking reproduces dominate global economic and political processes (Cooke 2003; Wilson 2006).

A case has been made that the objectivist paradigm is not suited to answer the research questions set out in Chapter 1, which aims to interrogate not just policy mainstreaming but also its close association with neoliberalism. Its core philosophical underpinnings are closely aligned with those of mainstreaming and NPM (see Chapter 2). Again, this discussion turns to Chipangura et al. who argues:

The development of disaster risk studies within human ecology and natural sciences, driven by the particular interests of technocrats, has created the paradigmatic view of disaster as non-routine, physical events... This hazard-centred or technocratic paradigm in which disaster risk is understood has been embedded in a general discourse of capitalist modernity where nature and society have been seen as separated and nature considered a commodity that can be appropriated and controlled through expert knowledge and modern administration (2016: 268).

If the questions were framed through an objectivist lens, the results would likely reproduce the same sort of reductionist and technocratic responses that fit uncomfortably with disaster risk reduction. More to the point, objectivist research would not account for the dynamic and constantly evolving complexity that is the reality of life in Nepal.

### **5.2.2 Constructivism and Qualitative Research Traditions**

This discussion now turns to the alternative choice of constructivism, the research paradigm selected for this thesis. Constructivists (closely related to interpretivism) have a different understanding of social reality than objectivists. Constructivism holds that reality is subjective and socially fabricated. The social world is not reducible to quantifiable laws and structures because every person attaches different interpretations to the world as they see it. In this sense, people

construct their own realities. The challenge of constructivist research lies in the fact people “participate in indeterminate lifeworlds, often attaching different interpretations and meanings to seemingly similar ‘facts’ and events (King and Horrocks 2010: 11). Social phenomena are in a constant state of flux (Bryman 2008). Recognising this, constructivism is not about finding one objective truth, but rather, the point is to keep the discussion going (Moses and Knutsen 2012). Constructivism does not have a prescribed hierarchy of research methods. Methodologies tend to be qualitative, and may include ethnography, narrative, phenomenological, or case study approaches.

Qualitative research methodologies are widely employed in disaster studies, especially in research concerning how social, economic, cultural and political systems influence disaster events (see chapters 2 and 3; Phillips 2014). Indeed, Chipangura et al. (2016) go so far as to argue that disasters are entirely a social construction and that the objective research agenda should be abandoned. This is not the central tenet of this thesis, but it does illustrate the salience of constructivism on disaster research. Although less widely used in political studies, constructivist research in the discipline has occurred and is gaining ground. Much of the policy change literature is rooted in a constructivist tradition (e.g. March and Olsen 1984; Hall 1993; Hay 2011). Hay suggests, “[p]olitical analysis couched in an interpretivist vein is, then, first and foremost concerned with capturing—or, as interpretivists typically prefer, with ‘reconstructing’—the meanings and beliefs of agent participants in political processes and practices” (Hay 2011: 168). Rayner elaborates on this by explaining how political actors construct meaning and influence within an institution:

“... the most productive approach is found amongst those historical institutionalists... who posit a world of agent action strategically with respect to institutional constraints whose functionality and efficiency are always in question. Neither rational calculating machines nor cultural dopes, actors reflexively monitor their interactions with institutions, seeking to change their institutional context as they learn about their own strategic successes and failures” (Rayner 2015: 73).

Thus, constructivist approaches are suited for research involving public policy problems—such as disaster risk reduction and its attendant solution of mainstreaming—because public policy problems are by their nature social constructs (Kisby 2011).

The significance of the qualitative approach is the emphasis it places on *understanding* and *explaining* the research subject matter of focus (Hay 2011;



King and Horrocks 2010); however, it is not without its critics. Where quantitative research provides statistical findings and correlations, qualitative research provides meaning. In order to do so, qualitative studies collect “fine-grained empirical detail” (Hay 2011: 173) from the social world giving a “detailed account of specific social settings, processes, or relationships” (King and Horrocks 2010: 11). Critiques of this approach argue that “social constructivism has some difficulty in justifying its own research findings insofar as that logically they can only be social constructions of social constructions” (Gomm 2009: 333). In order to address this critique, qualitative research rooted in constructivist methodologies use reflexivity, rigor, and procedural objectivity (Gomm 2009).

### **5.2.3 The Role of Reflectivity in Constructivist Research**

Constructivism recognises that the researcher plays an active role in the co-production of knowledge: “[i]f political subjects encounter the context in which they find themselves through a veil of ideas (beliefs, understandings and meaning), then does not the same apply to the political analysts?” (Hay 2011: 168). The person/analyst conducting the research brings their own “veil of ideas” that are generated from a host of variables. These may include attributes such as age, gender, nationality, ethnicity as well as attributes such as educational attainment, wealth, marital status, religious affiliations, and work experience. In a constructivist tradition, there are no assertions that research is unbiased and neutral, although steps are taken to minimize the bias that does exist. The researcher is required to reflect and report on how their personal beliefs and behaviours have influenced the research process (Ormston et al. 2014). Ormston et al. write that “... it is important that researchers themselves reflect on potential sources of bias and report on these alongside technical details of the study’s conduct” (Ormston et al. 2014: 23). By identifying and reflecting on one’s own belief, the aim is to acknowledge the role these beliefs have played in the construction of the research<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> In keeping with both the principles of reflexivity and the rigour and procedural objectivity demanded from robust social science research, the author herein discloses factors that were accounted for while conducting research. I am a Canadian, female PhD candidate, lucky to have earned a scholarship from Northumbria University in the UK to conduct this research. I am an English speaker and have no understanding of Nepali. I was raised in a low income single parent family, which has shaped my socialist and left leaning worldviews. I have a BSc in Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies from Brandon University, and an MSc in Disaster Management and Sustainable Development from Northumbria. I worked for a time as an emergency manager in the City of Victoria, located along Canada’s earthquake vulnerable west coast. As an

This thesis is rooted in the constructivist research tradition used in both disaster and policy change studies. Along with trying to grasp a better understanding of how Nepali bureaucrats and politicians understand the process of mainstreaming DRR, it also is a critique of the underlining assumptions of a post-NPM policy process that is a result of policymaking rooted in a politicized objectivist tradition. However, objectivist traditions also contribute somewhat to the development of this research. Objectivism reinforces the need for a systematic and reproducible methodological approach. Constructivist methodology on the other hand, enables a research framework that accesses a broader and more flexible field of inquiry. For the purposes of critiquing an established policy process the constructivist research agenda better allowed for gathering data that would interrogate the overall agenda in a unique way. Rather than a quantified account of mainstreaming DRR within the Government of Nepal, the objective is to understand how it was being transmitted and metabolized throughout the government and whether policy paradigm change is facilitated. In essence, it sought to understand how the Government of Nepal constructed mainstreaming DRR and what that meant for the policy process itself.

## **5.3 Research Design**

Having discussed and situated this research in a constructivist paradigm, this section moves on to discuss how this research was conducted.

### **5.3.1 Case Study Framework**

Researching mainstreaming DRR within an organisational setting such as the Government of Nepal is ideally suited for a case study approach. The focus on

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employee, I was struck by the need for the municipality to better work in a cross-sector way and the barriers that prevented us from doing so. My views of emergency management are shaped by my North American experience of working in a progressive office of emergency management and by the time spent in academia. This is another bias held against the dominant male, and paramilitary culture that dominates emergency management. While working at the City of Victoria, myself and a colleague would often wonder if we were focused on the right phase of emergency management. With limited budget and staff resources, most of our attention was directed towards preparing to respond. It was through academia that I gained an appreciation for the need to link disaster management with development processes by linking them through risk reduction strategies.

changing the policy dynamic also lends itself to using a case study approach.

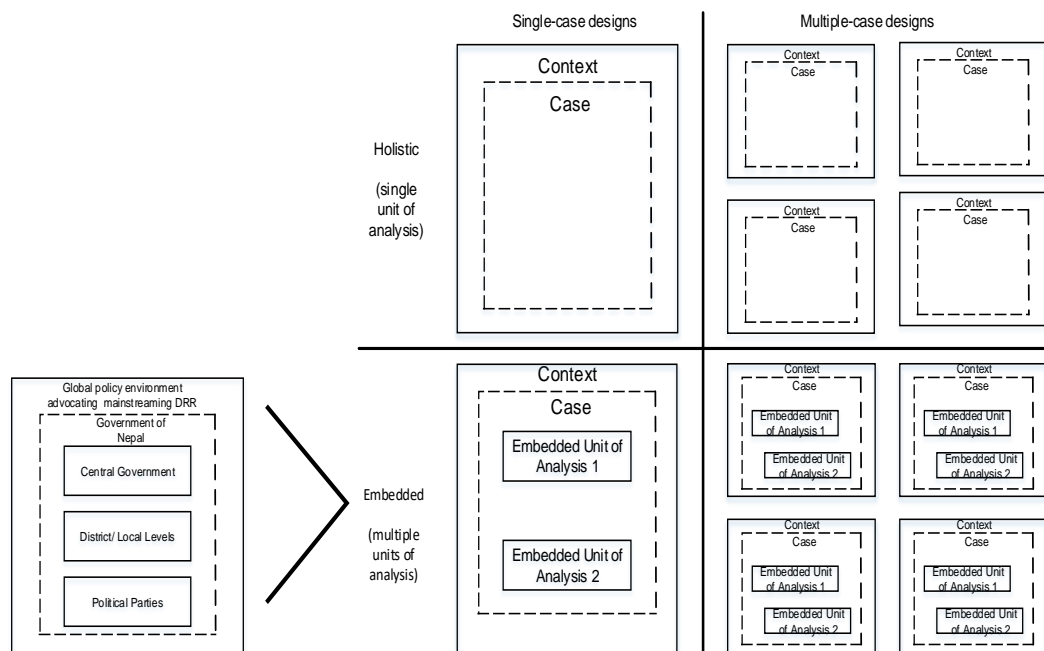
Cundill et.al (2014) find that:

“a common interest in change orientated social learning, and therefore processes of change, makes case studies a necessary approach because long term process analyses are required that are sensitive to social ecological contexts” (Cundill et al. 2014: 39).

Yin (2003) argues that a case study methodology is an appropriate strategy when a) the research questions being asked are ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions, b) the researcher has little ability to control the research environment, and c) the research is focused on contemporary real-life situations. All three of these criteria apply to this research. The research questions interrogate the how and why components of DRR mainstreaming in the GON. Conducting research within a government context means that there was little control of the research environment beyond fixing a time to meet with government staff (and at times that was beyond control). Finally, this research is aimed at exploring a contemporary policy process in a real-world setting. It was impossible to explore it in-depth in any other location (e.g. desk study, laboratory, etc.)

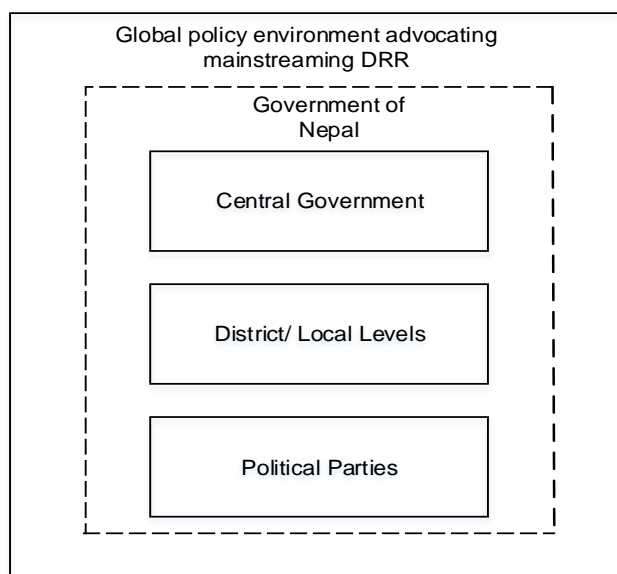
Using Yin’s (2003) conceptual framework, this research is framed as an embedded single-case study with multiple units of analysis (see Figure 5-1).

*Figure 5-1. Yin’s Conceptual Case-Study Framework*



(Source: adapted from Yin 2003: 40)

Figure 5-2. Enlarged Single-case Embedded Case Study Design



(Source: adapted from Yin 2003)

The wider details of the framework were evident: *context* being the global policy environment that advocated for mainstreaming DRR and the *case* being the Government of Nepal. All that was left to determine were the *embedded units of analysis* (herein called sub-units). Having multiple sub-units was a necessity; the research *context* and *case* were far too complex and broad in scope to fit Yin's *holistic* study framework. As discussed, the literature review indicated that mainstreaming DRR involved a multitude of different phenomena. Additionally, interviews were planned across a wide swath of the Government of Nepal (e.g. mainstreaming encompassing both horizontal and vertical integration) not just a single department or branch of government that might have made a holistic framework more feasible. Therefore, having multiple sub-units would help in focusing the case study inquiry (Yin 2003: 45).

Upon entering the field, the sub-units were intentionally left quite broad and amenable. The initial sub-units were: the process of mainstreaming, mainstreaming and decentralisation, and the politics of mainstreaming. As part of a constructivist research tradition, the exact focus of inquiry was left to be inductively derived through the data as it was generated. Through interaction with the participants it was hoped that they would lead and establish what the focus areas ought to be. The next few sections discuss in greater detail how the research process eventually led to establishing the *units of analysis*, which

would become the main topic areas for each of empirical chapters (Chapters 6-8).

### 5.3.2 Fieldwork and Site Selection

In total three trips were made to Nepal to collect data. These are outlined in Table 5-1. The bulk of data collected was gathered during Trip 2.

*Table 5-1. Fieldwork Dates and Seasonal Conditions*

Fieldwork	Dates	Conditions
<b>Trip 1</b> <b>Kathmandu Valley</b>	June 21, 2014-July 4, 2014	Season: Late <i>grishma ritu</i> (summer), early <i>barsha ritu</i> (monsoon) season. Hot, dry, dusty, some rain.
<b>Trip 2</b> <b>Kathmandu Valley, Baridya &amp; Solukhumbu Districts</b>	October 1, 2014 - April 11, 2015	Seasons: <i>Sharad ritu</i> (autumn), <i>hemanta ritu</i> (pre-winter), <i>shishir ritu</i> (winter), <i>basanta ritu</i> (spring). Some political unrest- the Constitution deadline was missed resulting in several days of organised <i>bandha</i> (strikes).
<b>Trip 3</b> <b>Kathmandu Valley</b>	March 31, 2016- May 14, 2016	Season: <i>Grishma ritu</i> (summer). Extremely hot, dusty and dry. One-year post-earthquake, 2 months after the end of a 135-day blockade along the Indian border.

With the exception of the Central Government Ministries, which were all physically located in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, the other field sites were determined while in the field during Trip 2.

*Table 5-2. Fieldwork Sites and Selection Determinants*

Lalitpur District/ Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City (LSMC)	It was always a research intention to conduct interviews within a large municipality located in Kathmandu Valley. LSMC was selected based on the advice of NSET. NSET had a long and supportive working relationship with the municipality and felt that the municipality would be more accessible for research than other municipalities in the area. By extension, Lalitpur district was selected. The District Development Office proved the most challenging to obtain interviews. For example, despite many failed attempts the Local Development Officer for the district was unable to be interviewed.
Bardiya District	Bardiya was selected on the recommendation of a staff member of the NGO Practical Action Nepal. It was a district that had been severely affected by flooding in 2014. Because of its propensity to flood, the district has had a lot of disaster and DRR interventions. Practical Action had completed a project to assist the district government with DRR mainstreaming. Practical Action offered research support in the district in exchange for a brief evaluative report on the level of mainstreaming found in the district. The promise of support fell through at the last minute, but regardless research for this thesis carried on.
Solukhumbu District	This site was selected near the end of Trip 2 and was chosen because of NSET. It was a district that has had few DRR interventions. NSET had just completed a scoping trip to assess traditional Sherpa building practices for their earthquake resiliency. This mountain district made an interesting contrast to Bardiya (terai/plains) and Lalitpur (urban Kathmandu Valley) both of which have had active NGO involvement in DRR.

## 5.4 Methods of Data Collection

This discussion now turns to look at the data collection methods employed. In order to answer the research questions, tools were needed that would enable the collection of rich descriptive data. Interviews were selected as the primary method. Another factor determining data collection had to do with the exploratory nature of this thesis. Tools were needed that allowed for a less structured approach—as opposed to fixed and tightly organised—so that participants would be free to discuss and reveal the subjective meaning and understanding of the topic area (Arthur et al. 2014). In the end three qualitative methods were selected: in-depth semi-structured interviews, document analysis,

and direct observation. Each method has its strengths and weakness (see Table 5-3) and is discussed in more detail below.

*Table 5-3. Methods: Strengths and Weaknesses*

Method	Strengths	Weakness
In-depth Semi Structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>targeted, focuses directly on case study topic</li> <li>insightful, provides perceived causal inferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bias due to poorly constructed questions</li> <li>reflexivity- interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear</li> <li>language and translation barriers</li> <li>time intensive, organising interviews, conducting, and transcription</li> <li>refusal, respondents refuse to be interviewed</li> </ul>
Document Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stable, can be reviewed repeatedly</li> <li>research is conducted with relatively little expense</li> <li>unobtrusive, not created as a result of the case study</li> <li>exact, contains exact names, references, and details of an event</li> <li>broad coverage, long span of time, many events and many settings</li> <li>may uncover issues not noted by other means</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retrievability, can be low</li> <li>can be time consuming to collect, review, and analyse many documents</li> <li>biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete</li> <li>reporting bias, reflects bias of author</li> <li>access, may be deliberately blocked</li> <li>language and translation barriers</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reality, covers events in real time</li> <li>contextual, covers context of event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time consuming</li> <li>selectivity- unless broad coverage</li> <li>reflexivity- event may proceed differently because it is being observed</li> <li>cost- hours needed by human observers</li> <li>language and translation barriers</li> </ul>

(Source: adapted from Yin 2003)

### **5.4.1 In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews**

In-depth interviews were selected as the primary data collection tool because of the potential for qualitative interviews to generate rich and descriptive data (King and Horrocks 2010). The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach. If visualized on a continuum from highly structured interviews to highly unstructured interviews, initially the approach taken fell more on the structured end. At first, a list of interview questions was closely followed giving the interview a more structured approach, but allowing room for digression and some flexibility. Over time this approach was relaxed and a topic guide was used instead of a list of questions. This created a relaxed and natural atmosphere that enabled a conversation rather than a methodical question-answer dynamic. The shift in interview tactics was partially the result of greater confidence and experience on the part of the author, and partially due to recognising that depending on the participant, most prescribed questions were irrelevant to their context.

Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings. The majority were conducted in a government or political party office. At the local level, some of the interviews were conducted outside the homes of the VDC secretaries. All interviews were audio recorded, and a majority (90%) of the interviews were transcribed. Almost 50% of interviews were conducted in English, the other 50% required the use of a translator (described below). The average length of an interview was roughly 45 minutes (they range in length from 15 minutes to 2 hours). As seen in Table 5-4 below, the majority of participants were male.



Table 5-4. Overview of Interviews Conducted

Field Site Location	Ministries/Divisions	Total	Male	Female	
<i>Ministry- Central</i>		18	18	0	
	Home Affairs				
	Federal Affairs and Local Dev'l Local Infrastructure and Building Code Specialist				
	National Planning Commission				
	Education				
	Irrigation (DWIDM)				
	Energy				
	Industry				
	Health and Population				
	Land Reform and Management				
	Science, Technology and Environment				
	Women, Children & Social Welfare				
	Physical Infrastructure and Transportation				
	Urban Development (KVDA)				
	Agricultural Development				
	<b>Political Party Representatives</b>				
	Maoist	2	2	0	
	United Marxist Leninist	3	3	0	
	Nepali Congress	3	3	3	
	National Campaign for Disaster Risk Reduction Members	4			

Field Site Location	Ministries/Divisions	Total	Male	Female	
<b><i>Lalitpur District</i></b>					
	Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City Executive Officer Police Division Social Welfare Division Urban Development Division Environment Division Finance Division Public Construction Division Heritage Conservation Division Urban Governance Expert (MOFALD) Fire Section Disaster Management Section Earthquake Safety Section Wards 12, 4, 15	23	17	6	
	District Development Office	3	2	1	
	Planning Officer				
	Technical Office				
	Energy, Environment & Climate Change Officer				
	Village Development Committee	1	1	0	
	Devichour				
<b><i>Bardiya District</i></b>					
	Gulyeria Municipality	7	7	0	
	Executive Officer				
	Urban Governance Expert				
	Fire Section				

Field Site Location	Ministries/Divisions	Total	Male	Female	
	Social Mobilizer				
	Human Resource Chief				
	Planning Officer				
	Urban Development Officer				
	District Development Committee	5	4	1	
	Local Development Officer				
	Technical Office				
	Administration Officer				
	District Governance Expert				
	Energy, Environment & Climate Change				
	Ministry Line Departments	4	3	1	
	District Education Officer				
	District Health Officer				
	District Agriculture Officer				
	District Women, Children & Social Welfare Officer				
	Village Development Committee	4	4	0	
	Shirpur				
	Khairi				
	Manau				
	Dhodhari				
	Political Party Representatives	3	3	0	
	Maoist				
	United Marxist Leninist				
	Nepali Congress				
<b>Solukhumbu District</b>					

Field Site Location	Ministries/Divisions	Total	Male	Female	
	Chief District Officer	1	1	0	
	District Development Committee	4	4	0	
	Local Development Officer				
	District Governance Expert				
	Technical Officer				
	Energy, Environment and Climate Change Officer				
	Ministry Line Departments	4	3	1	
	District Agricultural Officer				
	District Health Officer				
	District Women, Children and Social Welfare Officer				
	District Education Officer				
	Political Party Representatives	2	2	0	
	United Marxist Leninist				
	Nepali Congress				
Misc.	Nepal Staff Administration College	2	2	0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>88</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>10</b>	

## **5.4.2 Sampling Strategy and Interview Requests**

A combination of targeted and snowball sampling was used to reach research participants. The targeted approach involved using existing government DRR contacts and directly asking them for an interview. Traditional snowball sampling involves asking a research participant to suggest the name of another suitable interview participant, who then is asked to suggest a new contact, and so on. This strategy is particularly useful in research environments that are less than ideal, i.e. conflict zones (Cohen and Tamar 2011). In Nepal, although it is possible to establish contact with government staff members, the task was made easier by using existing networks and variations of snowball sampling.

## **5.4.3 Bardiya and Solukhumbu Sampling Strategies**

The snowball strategy was used in its traditional sense in the districts of Bardiya and Solukhumbu. The initial interview was held with the Chief District Officer (in Solukhumbu, contact pre-arranged through NSET) and the Executive Officer of Gulyeria (in Bardiya, contact through research assistant). Each higher-level contact endorsed the research, gave permission to conduct further research within their jurisdictions and provided the contact numbers for other participants to initiate the snowball effect. As word got out about the research, and as relationships were brokered, it became easier to engage participants.

## **5.4.4 Kathmandu Valley Sampling Strategies**

Conducting interviews at the Kathmandu Valley field sites (central government ministries and Lalitpur district) required a more formal approach than that taken in either Bardiya or Solukhumbu districts. Contact details of the central government ministry participants were mainly gathered through UNDP Nepal-Flagship 5<sup>26</sup> and through NSET. UNDP provided the names of the focal points designated to act as DRR representatives. UNDP was willing to share contact details because they saw value in a research project that focused on mainstreaming DRR policy. NSET provided contact with their government contacts who, in most cases had disaster management as part of their everyday

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<sup>26</sup> In 2011, UNDP funded a project to establish focal points in all Ministries to be the interface with disaster management and their ministry development initiatives (further discussion of the focal point system is in Chapter 6).

job portfolio (e.g. MoHA, MOFALD, Department of Water Induced Disaster Management) and were close associates with NSET.

Whenever possible, a week prior to contacting the Central ministry staff focal person, an email was sent to the potential respondent that included a) a Nepali letter of introduction and support from NSET, b) research information sheet in Nepali on university letterhead (both included in the supplementary appendices). The main body of the email was composed in English by the author and briefly included a synopsis of the research and a request for an interview. This alone never compelled a participant to establish a meeting time and location. The only method effective for this was a direct phone call made a week later. Most respondents acknowledged verbally that they had read and received the email, which made it easier to arrange an interview; it was less of a 'cold call' and the participant was expecting further contact. Especially when language was a barrier and the poor quality of phone lines, this facilitated things considerably.

Using the established focal points was largely beneficial. For the most part, they were aware of the issues surrounding DRR as they had received training and to some extent they were aware of the gaps in their own ministries related to DRR. However, because they had received some training they were not representative of the overall ministry. In some cases, the awareness of the focal persons was almost nil. But to take a larger sample from within each Ministry would have demanded a great deal more time and resources.

#### **5.4.5 The Challenges of Government Interviewing**

Despite the fact interviews can generate rich data, as the primary method there were some major challenges experienced in Nepal, including: the length of time it took to arrange interviews, participant reflectivity (in that it was clear the participant was saying what they thought the interviewer wanted to hear), and unless the respondent was fluent in English language barriers were a persistent challenge.

Arranging interviews with government employees was a uniquely frustrating and time-consuming experience, resultant from cultural differences. Scheduling appointments and sticking to timelines is unusual in Nepal. This meant the time spent trying to arrange and conduct interviews took much longer than they would

have in a UK or Canadian context. This was mostly the case for the Kathmandu Valley interviews. One scenario commonly met with was the participant requesting the author to call-back the next day to arrange an interview time. Following this advice, a second phone call was made in the morning of the next day to the participant; an interview time would be made for later in the day. The author would arrive at the pre-determined time, only to find the respondent was in another meeting, out of the building, at lunch, etc. This meant that it was impossible to conduct multiple interviews in one day, as one interview could take the whole day to chase up and be conducted. Fortunately, the second fieldtrip had six months and enough time was provided to conduct interviews in Kathmandu Valley. Arranging meetings in Bardiya and Solukhumbu was much less formal and time consuming. There it was possible to conduct several interviews in a day. In these districts, it usually only took gaining approval of the chief bureaucrat (e.g. Local Development Officer or Executive Officer) and then the author was free to start pursuing interviews.

Another challenge of using the interview approach was the reflexivity on part of the respondent. For the most part, participants seemed to give a balanced account of the work being done. However, there were instances of extremes in either direction. As government employees, it needed to be recognized that they were bounded by their institutional allegiances. Outright candour and frankness in the interviews was rare, but when experienced was appreciated. Some respondents clearly exaggerated the importance of the topic within the GON and the level of work being done. Most participants fell in between these extremes. A majority of respondents provided thoughtful and considered interviews. This variability of responses was largely mitigated by balancing what was clearly observable of concrete efforts to mainstream DRR. It was clear from the lack of progress in the areas of DRR (most noticeably in the post-earthquake interviews) that very little had/was being done concerning mainstreaming DRR. In order to meet this challenge, it required a change in interview questions for those officials claiming great progress. Questions were altered to challenge their assertions.

The final major challenge with interviews concerns language barriers. Similar to other PhDs conducted in Nepal (e.g. Owen 2009) language was one of the biggest barriers to conducting research. At both the central government level and in Lalitpur District, most government staff were able to communicate in

English. A translator was used when this was not possible. The insights and understandings generated from the interviews conducted in English were valuable insofar as the level of English fluency the participant had. Barring strong fluency, nothing compared with the interviews conducted in Nepali. Upon reviewing the transcribed and translated interviews conducted in Nepali, the benefits of participants expressing themselves in their first language was clearly preferred.

#### **5.4.6 Document Analysis**

A secondary method used was that of document analysis. In the process of fieldwork, it was common to hear respondents remark that the GON was good at producing documents but poor at implementing them. Therefore, the main value of document analysis provided insights into what the GON considered best practice. It was soon apparent that the majority of GON documents themselves did not represent government actions (beyond the production of the document) nor could they be used to further explain processes. Here was a clear case of rhetoric meeting reality. Prior argues that “[i]n approaching documents as a field for research we should forever keep in mind the dynamic involved in the relationships between the production, consumption, and content” (Prior 2003: 26). Every document is a construct that has been developed in a particular context and social setting. What is included or excluded in a document or even its very existence can reveal much about an author, an organisation, a government, etc. The documents themselves are “‘social facts’ in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways” (Atkinson and Coffey 2004: 58).

When reviewing documents, the following set of questions (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995 in Silverman 2013: 286) proved helpful in considering how the document stood as a social construct.



Table 5-5. Assessing Documents

<b>1</b>	<b>How are documents written?</b>
<b>2</b>	How are they read?
<b>3</b>	Who writes them?
<b>4</b>	Who reads them?
<b>5</b>	For what purpose?
<b>6</b>	On what occasion?
<b>7</b>	With what outcomes?
<b>8</b>	What is recorded?
<b>9</b>	What is omitted?
<b>10</b>	What is taken for granted?
<b>11</b>	What does the writer seem to take for granted about the readers?
<b>12</b>	What do readers need to know in order to make sense of them?

(Source: Hammersley and Atkinson 1995 in Silverman 2013: 286)

Documents are not merely props or byproducts of human action but are a reflection of the current mode of thinking (Prior 2003).

#### 5.4.7 Observation

The final method used was observation as a complement to the data collected through interviews and was done concurrently with the interview process. This method was not employed as fully as originally planned. Initially, the author tried to be embedded within a central government ministry related to DRR (e.g. MOFALD, MUD), with the aim to adopt a more ethnographic methodology and spend time observing-participating in government processes from within. However, upon entering the field it became apparent that this approach would not be feasible. Firstly, many central level ministries are located within a gated compound called Singha Durbar, located in Kathmandu (discussed in Chapter 4). Nepali contacts felt it would be too difficult for an 'outsider' to gain that level of daily access within the compound. Secondly, the language barrier would have stifled any gains. Although English is widely spoken at the central level, Nepali is mostly spoken between government staff.

Instead, observation was used as a method to gain understanding, and was advantageous for gaining insights into the environment of government. Although the author was not allowed to engage in entrenched observation, the interview process allowed for many hours spent inside government buildings. During this time, it was observable whether staff were busy, how long tea breaks would last, how organised the office spaces were, the types of interactions between staff,

etc. This served to provide “an understanding of the physical context for what is later described in interviews” (McNaughton-Nicholls et al. 2014: 254).

## **5.5 Practicalities and Logistical Considerations**

Undertaking fieldwork in a developing world context like Nepal presents unique challenges. No matter the amount of planning and preparedness, fieldwork required flexibility and determination.

### **5.5.1 Research Assistants**

Two Nepali research assistants were employed for this research. Both were male recent university graduates, in their early 20s, and from a high caste (Brahmin). The main RA employed, Dipendra Sapkota, assisted with arranging interviews in Kathmandu Valley and Solukhumbu, provided translation services during interviews, and was employed to translate and transcribe the recorded interviews once the fieldwork was complete. Originally, he was employed as the author’s language tutor, but his employment quickly evolved to RA. He was born and raised in Kathmandu Valley. He was an enormous asset for this research. His educational background was in microbiology; however, he was very quick to catch on to the jargon and themes related to DRR.

The second research assistant, Bishesh Gautam, was employed only in the field in Bardiya as Dipendra was not able to travel at that time. He was recommended through a personal contact at an NGO. Bishesh was a recent graduate of an MA in Rural Development and was from a prominent family based in Bardiya’s district capital city, Guleryia. His uncle was the elected Nepali Congress representative from the district in the Constituent Assembly. His family connections in the district was an asset when requesting interviews. However, at times it was also was a liability. At some points, there was a sense that the participants were measured in their responses because of the RA’s family connections. However, his influence and ability to get interviews outweighed his positionality. His outgoing and upbeat personality made most people to feel at ease.

### **5.5.2 Ethics**

Before entering the field, this research met all university ethical requirements. Internal research ethics approval was granted on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Throughout the fieldwork, all respondents were given information sheets about the research which included clear statements that participation was voluntary and at any time before, during or after, they could withdraw consent. This was typically reiterated again by the researcher. The researchers contact information was provided in the form of both a business card and included on the information sheet. Before starting the interviews, the respondents were asked to review and give informed consent. The respondents could choose to remain anonymous or consent for their identity to be disclosed. The majority of senior level bureaucrats chose to allow their identities to be disclosed, whereas, the majority of subordinate staff wished to remain anonymous. All political party members did not wish for their identities to be kept anonymous. Both the information sheets and the informed consent sheets were provided in either English or Nepali based on the respondent's preference. In total, 100% of respondents provided signed informed consent.

During the write-up process the wishes of the respondents were maintained. In a few instances, where the respondent had selected to be disclosed but their response proved to be a bit controversial or could prove problematic, the respondents identify was kept anonymous. The challenge of protecting respondents is daunting. In many instances, the government respondent could be easily identifiable with minimal effort. This presented certain challenges as based on their ministry, geographic location, and/or job position they were prominent and could be easy to identify. In these instances, identifying features (project name, participant job title) were removed.

### **5.5.3 Positionality**

Being a female researcher in a predominantly male environment was a non-issue for the majority of respondents. Women are poorly represented in the bureaucracy (Mahat 2003, Udas and Zwarteveen 2010), and rarely found in policy or executive levels. As Table 5-4 shows, only 12% of the respondents for this study were women, the majority of women respondents were found in the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. In order to gain credibility, past

work history of the researcher (e.g. Canadian emergency management at the local government level) was used as an ice-breaker. Challenges faced working in the Canadian local government and trying to advance DRR were described, with an emphasis on the problems faced. The message that was conveyed was that this was a supportive research agenda that recognized the challenge of DRR as being universal and global. Often this was an effective way to bridge differences, and to create an understanding of a shared work space, albeit with contextual differences. It also led to credibility of the researcher as someone who was experienced and knowledgeable about not just disaster management but also government contexts.

Scheyvens et al. (2003) argue that positionality and “ethical issues which arise in relation to cross-cultural situations thus need to be considered and questioned seriously by all scholars pondering fieldwork in the Third World, and ethical principles should in turn inform all stages of research” (Scheyvens et al., 2003: 139). For the most part, the type of power relations described in most development fieldwork texts, where the researcher held power over the researched, did not seem to arise in this research. Perhaps this is because the research focus was not at the community level, but instead was focused within the government. The bureaucracy in Nepal remains a powerful and highly politicized institution. In several frustrating instances, it seemed as if the government officials held all the power to derail this research agenda by either ignoring interview requests or refusing to participate. On the third research trip, the government in power had changed and was taking a hard line against ‘foreigners’ who were openly critical of the government, particularly in the area of human rights<sup>27</sup>. This radically changed the power dynamic and led to the researcher becoming much more circumspect about her research activities, especially in light of the third fieldwork trip in the post-earthquake environment—an environment that was especially easy to be critical of government activities (or rather the lack thereof).

There was an instance where the relationship between researcher and the respondents became skewed and this was the result of not being explicit about the purpose of the fieldwork. This occurred in Solukhumbu District when a local

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<sup>27</sup> On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, Robert Penner (a Canadian who was living and working with a valid work visa in Nepal) was arrested and later deported on the basis of his Twitter activities. In particular, Penner was vocal about government abuses during the blockade.

resident mistook the researcher's agenda for the possibility of a development project. Although he himself was not asked to be a respondent, he took it upon himself to offer help to the researcher. It was not until the end of the research trip that the misconception became apparent. It was explained to him that this fieldwork was only for academic purposes and no project or funding would follow. The lesson derived from this was that the researcher would always be perceived as able to access project funding- given the heavy reliance on NGOs in Nepal. This was less so at the central government level, where bureaucrats were used to working with UN and NGO staff. At the central level, this was a hurdle the researcher had to surmount- the fact that without project funding in hand, central government staff motivations to respond to interview requests were harder to gain.

#### **5.5.4 Gaining Access**

The hierarchical nature of Nepalese administration made gaining research permissions at times a complicated procedure and at others very straightforward. The first set of interviews were conducted at LSMC in December 2014, with the official request made through NSET's Deputy Director. NSET drafted a letter to the Executive Officer of the municipality, introducing the researcher as an intern, which satisfied all concerned because my affiliation and the responsibility for my actions was NSET's. The NSET letter was signed by the EO, which was my pass to commence research within the municipality. No challenges or problems were made throughout the month spent researching at LSMC.

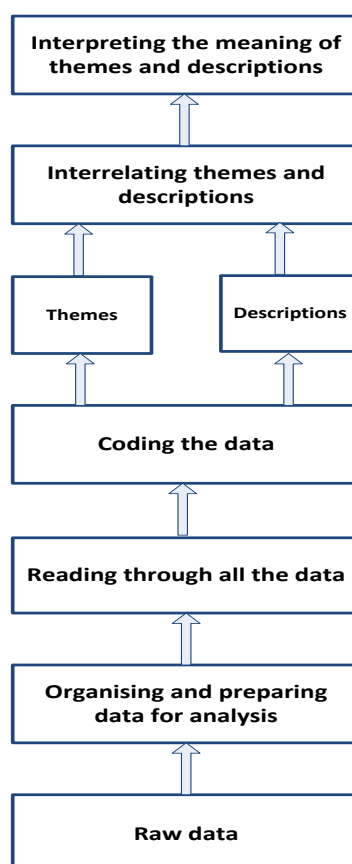
Research permission for central government interviews was not as straightforward. Again, NSET brokered the first two interviews with two key ministries- Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. Perhaps their consent to be interviewed represented a tacit consent and all that was formally required. It put the research on the radar of the two most active ministries in the area of DRR and if they had wished it to not proceed they could have stopped it if they wished. The reality of dealing with the central government was that to push too hard to gain proper central level consent might have derailed the entire research agenda. It is likely the research would be stonewalled, either on purpose or through bureaucratic ineptitude. In

any case, no problems were encountered and thirteen ministries were interviewed.

### 5.5.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis closely followed that as outlined by Creswell (2009) in Figure 5-3.

*Figure 5-3. Data Analysis Process*



(Source: adapted from Creswell 2009: 185)

The first step was to transcribe the recorded interviews. The majority of interviews were transcribed in full. Transcribing was an on-going process that occurred both during fieldwork and at the university. Transcription was a lengthy, expensive, and time-consuming endeavour. As previously noted, the interviews were approximately 50% English and 50% Nepali. The primary research assistant, Dipendra, did all of the translating and transcribing of the Nepali interviews deemed most important, while the author transcribed the English recordings. The transcription software F5 was used for the transcription.

The next step of the data analysis process was a read through of all the data. In reality, the process of data collection was an iterative process and the transcriptions had been reviewed as they were completed in order to consider the direction that the research was taking. However, once the fieldwork was completed a period of time was set aside for reviewing the transcriptions based on a broad categorisation. It was determined at this stage that the embedded units of analysis (see Figure 5-1) would be the different jurisdictions of the policy mainstreaming process, for example, a) the central government (transcriptions n=18), b) the district and local governments (transcriptions n=58), and c) the political parties (transcriptions n=9). The district and local government units of analysis were further broken down into sub-groups by jurisdiction (i.e. LSMC, District Development Office- Lalitpur, District Development Office- Solukhumbu).

The next step required the labelling (or coding) of the data. This was done manually and without the aid of computer software. This allowed for a more hands on process. Each embedded unit of analysis was labelled separately. Organising and structuring the labelling process was made easier through the data being collected through semi-structured interviews. Although there was room for digression, most interviews followed the same pattern of questions. Therefore, all transcripts were roughly organised in the same manner and around the key themes of the research.

For each embedded unit of analysis (later to become empirical chapters 6-8), a framework was created. Based on a thorough read-through of the interview data, each of the four sub-questions were either restated or reformulated to better reflect how the data presented itself. Each transcript was then reviewed in order to assess how the respondent answered the sub-question. Excerpts were cut and pasted from the transcript into the data framework (see Figure 5-4 below). Data was sorted by political party and colour coded by jurisdiction- Solukhumbu, Bardiya, and central level. This allowed the data to be easily compared and contrasted both within and across jurisdictions.

Figure 5-4. Example of Data Sorting Table

What are political parties currently doing to mainstream DRR?	
	different needs at different places.
#55	<p>87- Yes, the issue of climate change is addressed in our manifesto. I can't tell you what exactly is written about climate change but there is something about the environment in it.</p> <p>78- No, there is nothing specific about DRR or disaster management in the Maoist manifesto. However, we are actively working to aware the people about disasters and in finding ways for reducing the risk of disasters. Moreover, we also make voluntary contributions for rescue operations and raise our voice and make initiatives for providing relief to the victims of disasters in time.</p> <p>99- We have been making some initiatives. Like, the office of Karnali River Control Project has been recently established in <u>Rajapur</u>. It's a huge project with an aim to control the <u>Bheri</u> and Karnali River in an organized way. When our party was in the government, we made initiatives for that and it has now been possible. Similarly, the parties have come to the conclusion that a master plan has to be made for controlling <u>Babai</u> River. If possible, a separate project like the Karnali River Control Project has to be started for <u>Babai</u> River as well in order to reduce the water-borne disasters in this district. We have been making possible efforts from our side for that and we wish we can make it happen in time</p>
#56	<p>81- Nepal is at high risk of disasters and we have made a commitment that our party shall take it as an important issue. We shall work effectively for reducing the risk of such disasters when our party is in the government. It's in written form in our election manifesto of the CA election 2013. The current Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister was elected from Constituency number 1 of Bardiya district and he is also the Vice Chairman of our party. Sufficient budget has been sanctioned by the government after the floods as per the estimation and the demand of the DDRC. 60 million rupees has been sanctioned for agriculture, 37.5 million for veterinary, 60 million for DDC and 37.5 million for the municipality. Similarly, 390 million rupees has been allocated for river control for which only 80 million rupees was allocated last year. For the river control in <u>Rajapur</u>, certain budget is also being allocated. As per the commitment of our party, the coalition government of the UML and the Nepali Congress sanctioned sufficient budget for the risk reduction and reconstruction of infrastructures destroyed by the floods.</p> <p>173- You are very well informed about disaster management and risk reduction. What is the role of the political party then in pushing that agenda of public safety forwards? The people are talking about it and pushing for it really from what I have heard. So, knowing what you know, how does a political party then change the direction of the development of Nepal?</p> <p>179- How long have been in Nepal? (I: Almost six months.) Then you might not know a lot of things. In Nepal, there is a central government and the local body. In the local body, there are DDC, Municipality and VDC. It has been 13 years that the local bodies are without local representatives. The local body election has not taken place for 17-18 years for different reasons. We are now in the constitution making process because of which the local body election has not been possible to happen.</p>
#71	No data
Maoist	No data
#72	<p>70- At this time when the local election has not been able to take place, the political parties play a vital role. As I am residing in a rural area, I am very much focused on the projects like hydroelectricity, roads and tourism development. As I said earlier, while carrying out development works people's property is destroyed which makes me very sad. Once the budget is allocated for a particular development work, we unwillingly will have to encroach people's land. People will have to suffer the disaster that the development will bring. The</p>

(Source: the author)

## 5.6 Reflections on Methodology

Rooting this research in a social constructivist paradigm was a critical component for being able to address the research objectives and questions. In the absence of strong legislative authority and institutional processes it is mostly up to bureaucrats to interpret and implement policy according to their own motivations, enrichment, and beliefs. As discussed throughout this research, social learning is critical to this process. Cundill et al. (2014) were correct in their assertion that case-study research is ideal for studying the process of change through social learning. In addition, there is a long historical precedent of policymaking in Nepal being made on the subjective whim of the monarchy or dynasty autocrat. Evidenced-based, objective policymaking does not exist in the current Nepal government environment.



What is more, this research aimed to avoid a superficial understanding of the mainstreaming DRR dynamic in Nepal and drill down to uncover the real barriers preventing change. Using qualitative interview approaches allowed the scope for bureaucrats to frame the challenges and opportunities they faced and to discuss both mainstreaming and DRR as they understood it to be. Assessing documents produced by the GON and the political parties as social constructs shed light on the relationships between international organisations, the GON, and the electoral voters. For example, the election manifestos (later discussed in Chapter 8) represented what the political parties understood *could* win an election; that they included content related to DRR was an indication that the political parties were responding to public, but more likely to external influences like the UN and donor initiatives. So too, the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (later discussed in Chapter 6) was produced with extensive consultation, but later revised by MOHA. That the National Strategy included global development buzzwords is itself a reflection of the relationship dynamic between supranational organisations, donors, and the GON.

Methods and methodology are only as good as the skill of the researcher employing them, so it is useful to reflect not only on the methodology but also on how the researcher's skills and confidence evolved over the course of this research. This thesis and its methodology is a reflection of a learning journey and much was learned through trial and error.

## 6 Mainstreaming DRR: Central Government Rhetoric or Stimulus for Change?

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### 6.1 Introduction

The majority of data used in this chapter was collected months and weeks before the April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 earthquake. Two months prior to the earthquake, the Ministry responsible for disaster management in Nepal (MOHA) suggested that it was supportive of a *significant* change in policy with the reorientation of disaster management throughout the GON:

*And if we could succeed to incorporate all disaster policies in all sector planning then at that time then maybe we don't need a disaster management plan or policies. This is the goal of disaster management policy is not to have a disaster management policy in the future. It has to be incorporated in all sectors. All sectors speak for disaster (MOHA).*

The respondent suggests that MOHA supports what Hall (1993) termed a third order change in policy. In light of the literature review and the discussion of Nepal's administrative history, this is a progressive yet highly questionable policy position for MOHA to have taken. So much so, that it has generated the overarching question that guides this chapter- is mainstreaming DRR at the central government level merely rhetoric or does it serve as a substantive policy agenda for change? In order to answer this, the chapter is organised to answer the following sub questions:

1. What led to the GON's adoption of mainstreaming DRR as a policy strategy?

2. How is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) responding to the change from disaster management to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction throughout the government?
3. Is mainstreaming DRR seen as a cross-sector development issue within the government?
4. Within the disaster policy subsystem are there any advocacy coalitions (from the ACF) within the central government pushing for policy change?

The focus of this chapter is the central government level. If mainstreaming DRR is to be found in Nepal, it is more likely to be found in the central government. As discussed in Chapter 4, historically power has always resided at the upper echelons of the administrative government body. In contemporary Nepal, things are no different. In the absence of local elections, the central government is the most functional level of government; it controls and directs policy agendas and spending down to the local level.

Eighteen in depth semi-structured interviews were held across the central government in ministries, departments, and one development authority that reported to the central government. Interviews were also held at the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC). Additionally, information gleaned through informal discussions are also used to further contextualise the discussion. The majority of government respondents were undersecretaries within their ministry, one respondent was a joint secretary. All government respondents were male.

This chapter starts by examining how the mainstreaming DRR policy agenda rose to prominence within the GON. It then looks at how MOHA is responding to the shift in policy and whether or not DRR policy is being framed as a cross-sector development issue at the central government level. The next section identifies existing policy coalitions (as discussed in the Advocacy Coalition Framework) by examining the level of subsystem involvement (Candel and Biesbroek 2016) throughout the central government. Next, it examines how two of the respondents described the process of project coordination in the GON. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief post-script from fieldwork conducted after the earthquake.

## 6.2 The Shift from Disaster Management to Disaster Risk Reduction

This section answers the question, what led to the GON's adoption of mainstreaming DRR as a policy strategy? Nepal's disaster management cultural and legal situation is discussed and then the policy change agenda of mainstreaming DRR is examined.

### 6.2.1 Nepal's Response Paradigm

Nepal's disaster management institution shares the same problematic global paramilitary response culture that was outlined in Chapter 2. The *Natural Calamity Relief Act* (NCR Act) was ratified in 1982 and continues to guide disaster responsibilities. The *NCR Act* does not require any actions to be taken for disaster mitigation nor recovery- it only requires minimal actions related to response preparedness. The *NCR Act* establishes the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) as the ministry responsible for disaster management. MOHA is responsible for "ensur[ing] security, rule of law and good governance through integrated and co-ordinated mobilisation of resources" (GON 2013: 2). The ministry has control over the Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force which are deployed in times of disaster.

There is a danger of characterising MOHA and the police forces it commands as instruments of public protection. Until recently, paramilitary forces in Nepal were used for suppression and for the limiting of rights and freedoms (Pandey 2009). In the last decade Nepal's security forces have been reformed to be "democratic, transparent and accountable to the people" (ibid: 253). Over the course of this fieldwork, the tenuous relationship between the public and the police was evident. Concerns were raised over police action during the 2015 protests against the newly enacted Constitution. As reported by a 2015 Human Rights Watch report:

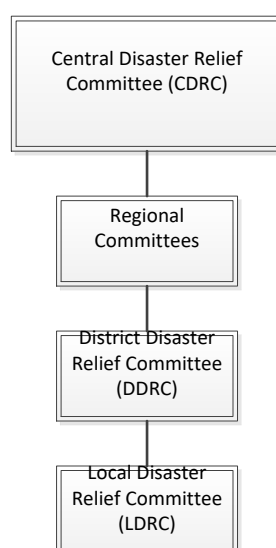
"There is, in short, compelling evidence of criminal attacks on defenseless police by protesters, and abundant evidence in several cases of serious crimes by police against protesters and bystanders, including disproportionate use of force and extrajudicial killings. In addition to the deaths, hundreds of people have been injured, some of them grievously"

(Human Rights Watch 2015: Online).

This is problematic, since MOHA's historical role in disaster management means that it is now the *de facto* ministry responsible for coordinating mainstreaming DRR. It was disclosed during an informal discussion that MOHA could 'shut down' an organisation's work in DRM if it saw fit to do so. This highlighted the extent of power that MOHA has in the government and a wariness of MOHA amongst actors in the DRM subsystem.

Returning to the existing legislation, although the *NCR Act* was written in the time of the Panchayat government and makes reference to the monarchy, its administrative structures still fit Nepal's highly centralised governance structure. The legislation establishes disaster relief committees at the central, regional, district and local administrative levels (Figure 6-1) that are chaired by MOHA. These committees are routinely activated in times of disaster and their function was well understood by a majority of respondents.

*Figure 6-1. Nepal's Disaster Response Structure*



The legacy of the *NCA Act* has been twofold: 1) to entrench disaster response/relief as the primary role for government and 2) to entrench the Ministry of Home Affairs' role as the primary government body responsible for disaster management. MOHA's role as the ministry with responsibility for all components of disaster management was widely acknowledged by central government respondents:

*MOHA is the main ministry dealing in Nepal regarding DRR programs (Ministry of Energy).*

*MOHA is the lead ministry and the DM and relief section... and National Emergency Operations Centre is already established. And some of the national adaptation plan of action has already been prepared. Local adaptation plan of action, district EOC centre is active under chairmanship of CDO. Since all these mechanisms are more related to MOHA because they are the leading Ministry related to DRR (Ministry of Agricultural Development).*

*There are no specific policies or legislations on earthquake risk reduction within our ministry. We do not focus so much on that issue as the Ministry of Home Affairs is working on that (Ministry of Industry).*

There was evidence to suggest that MOHA's role as the lead agency for disaster management was being strengthened. In recent years, the disaster management division within MOHA had grown from a "four or five-person section but now you can see twenty people around" (MOHA). At the same time, the respondent from the Ministry of Health and Population stated that there was a decrease in GON funding for DRR initiatives in his ministry because more money was being directed to MOHA:

*No, I see the decrease in funding. That is what I was telling you earlier. They have the funding, we have to go from our Ministry to the National Planning Commission to ultimately the Ministry of Finance. They have funding for MOHA more. In the recent years, earlier they have allocated to the MOHP also for new activities as emergency fund for hospital retrofitting program, and for the capacity building program. In those areas, they used to allocate funds. But now we internally manage funds and with the help of other partners, donor agencies. But from the government mechanism it is very nominal (MOHP).*

The evidence suggests that the response paradigm is becoming even further entrenched within the GON. This is a historical and legal precedent set by the NCR Act that is continuing to be reinforced through greater GON expenditure on human resources and budget allocations being given to MOHA.

### **6.2.2 Bringing About DRR Policy Paradigm Change**

In light of the strong institutionalised disaster response paradigm discussed above efforts were underway in Nepal to shift the paradigm to that of disaster risk reduction. These efforts are discussed in the following section.

#### **6.2.2.1 *The Hyogo Framework for Action and the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management***

The primary impetus for mainstreaming DRR in Nepal came through the Hyogo Framework for Action, and subsequent donor and INGO driven incentives to reform Nepal's antiquated disaster management institutions to meet HFA objectives. In response to the HFA, the *National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal* (herein referred to as the *National Strategy*) was adopted by the GON in 2009 as "the result of the necessity felt for a concrete, meaningful and integrated document based on Hyogo Framework of Action..." (GON 2009: iv). In the absence of legislation, the National Strategy is the only central level document that outlines the GON policy goals and articulates how the GON frames (or defines) the DRR policy problem.

The development of the National Strategy was the result of external GON stakeholder efforts. For instance, funding for the development of the National Strategy was provided by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department, UNDP provided project coordination, and technical assistance was provided by the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) (NSET 2011). Having been endorsed by the GON, the *National Strategy* explicitly sets mainstreaming DRR as a policy goal.

Table 6-1. Comparison of the HFA and the Nepal National Strategy

Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015		National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management in Nepal, 2009
Priority Action One	<p>Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation. →</p> <p>Key activities:</p> <p>Support the creation and strengthening of national integrated disaster risk reduction mechanisms, such as multi sectoral national platforms, with designated responsibilities at the national through to the local levels to facilitated coordination across sectors. National platforms should also facilitate coordination across sectors, including by mainstreaming a broad based dialogue at national and regional levels for promoting awareness among the relevant sectors. →</p> <p>Integrate risk reduction, as appropriate, into development policies and planning at all levels of government, including in poverty reduction strategies and sectors and multi sector policies and plans.</p>	<p>Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation:</p> <p>Strategic Activity 3: mainstream DRR into national development.</p> <p>Strategic Activity 4: integrate DRR and preparedness into development plans, programmes and regular activities of local development institutions for effective response to disasters.</p>
Priority Action Four	<p>Reduce the underlying risk factors</p> <p>(iii) Land-use planning and other technical measures:</p> <p>(o) Mainstream disaster risk considerations into planning procedures for major infrastructure projects, including the criteria for design, approval and implementation of such projects and considerations based on social, economic and environmental impact assessments.</p>	<p>Reducing the underlying risk factors:</p> <p>Strategic activity 19: Integrate DRR concept into infrastructure development planning, and execution processes.</p>

(Source: UNISDR 2005; GON 2009)

The *National Strategy* gives importance to institutional development and prescribes mainstreaming/integrating DRR as a strategic priority for implementation. The frequency upon which the *National Strategy* document uses the terms mainstreaming and integration is indicative of the GONs support



for the policy process, i.e. “mainstreaming” (n=20), “integrate DRR” (n=3) and “integration of DRR” (n= 4). As seen in Table 6-1, the *National Strategy* shares similar language to the HFA, providing further evidence that mainstreaming DRR in the GON was diffused directly through the UNISDR HFA framework.

Although the *National Strategy* maintains HFA’s focus on mainstreaming and integration of DRR, it removed much of the detailed content found in the HFA. At no point does the *National Strategy* provide a definition of mainstreaming nor does it provide the GON sector ministries with guidance for integrating DRR into sector plans and policy. The closest the *National Strategy* comes to offering substantive processual guidance is outlined in Table 6-2.

*Table 6-2. National Strategy Central Level Mainstreaming DRR Directives*

Challenges	Strategic Activity	Indicative and Outcomes	Responsible Agency
Enhancement of the <b>spirit of integrated outlook</b> among all agencies, sectors, and individuals is necessary for mainstreaming development programs into DRR related issues. It is also necessary to give thought to link disaster related issues with poverty reduction program and MDG.	Mainstreaming DRM into National Development.	<p>DRM mainstreamed in existing National Development Strategy and policies including PRSP, MDG and Periodic Development Plans.</p> <p>Arrangement made for mandatory disaster risk assessment of large infrastructure development projects.</p> <p>A contact point at all ministries for the formulation and implementation of disaster risk mitigation and preparedness program.</p>	All concerned ministries, NPC, and National Disaster Management Authority (proposed).

(Source: GON 2009)

As seen in Table 6-2, the *National Strategy* seeks to enhance “the spirit of integrated outlook”, but this alone in the Nepal public administrative context is not enough to incite action (see Chapter 4). Some of the recommended actions

in the Indicative and Outcomes column had been acted upon, such as incorporating DRR into various national level development plans and focal persons in each ministry. It makes reference to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as an agency responsible for implementation. The creation of the NDMA as a high level government agency has been proposed in Nepal since 2008. It is a contested feature of the National Strategy and is discussed below in section 6.3.1.

#### **6.2.2.2 *Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC): Flagships Four and Five***

The discussion now turns to discuss the two mechanisms that were working to support the GON's adoption of mainstreaming DRR. To assist the GON to achieve its *National Strategy*/HFA commitments, an innovative strategy was devised by the Nepal UN Resident Coordinator at the time. Launched in 2009 by UNDP in partnership with the GON, the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium is a unique and integrative mechanism "to prioritize and implement key elements of the NSDRM" (IFCR 2011: 8). A Steering Committee, made up of senior government officials, donors, UN agencies and others oversee five thematic programme areas (called Flagships) each led by a GON ministry and supported by a relevant INGO/NGO. They are organized as follows:

Flagship 1: School and Hospital Safety (led by Asian Development Bank/Ministry of Education & World Health Organisation/Ministry of Health and Population)

Flagship 2: Emergency Preparedness and Response (led by Red Cross/Ministry of Home Affairs)

Flagship 3: Flood Risk Management (led by World Bank/Ministry of Irrigation)

Flagship 4: Community Based Disaster Risk Management (led by International Federation of Red Cross/Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development)

Flagship 5: Policy/Institutional Strengthening (led by United Nations Development Programme/Ministry of Home Affairs)

Mainstreaming DRM is considered a 'key element' of the *National Strategy* that both Flagship 4 led by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (community/local level) and Flagship 5 led by MOHA (central level policy) are working to address. The main role of each Flagship is to facilitate coordination and compile lessons learned. An online information sharing platform for both flagships had been created, allowing access to some of the meeting minutes, presentations, and documents<sup>28</sup>. The result was greater transparency around the processes concerning disaster risk management, which is in stark contrast to the way MOHA traditionally operated as a powerful, clandestine, law and order institution.

### **6.2.2.3 DRR Focal Point System**

In 2011, UNDP-Nepal launched a \$16.55 million (USD) Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Project (CDRMP) "to strengthen the institutional and legislative aspects of disaster risk management (DRM) in Nepal by building the capacities of MOHA, MOFALD, other partner ministries, departments and local governments..." (UNDP 2015: Online). Unlike the coordination function of the NRRC, the CDRMP was a programme aimed at direct government intervention. One component of the CDRMP was support for MOHA to jointly establish along with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (MOSTE) a Climate Change (CC) and DRM Focal Point<sup>29</sup> System. The Focal Point System was intended to "develop an institutional mechanism that would harmonize and effectively respond to future needs of disaster risks and risks aggregated due to climate change impact" (UNDP-Nepal 2015: 5). This was the most visible policy instrument for mainstreaming DRR observed.

The majority of central government respondents (n=9) interviewed for this research were (or had been) their ministry CC/DRM focal point. A CC/DRM focal point is a government staff member who is typically appointed (in most cases they were 'voluntold' by senior ranking ministry staff) and assigned the DRR portfolio for their ministry. Initially twenty-six Focal Points from various Ministries were assigned (UNDP-Nepal 2015). One respondent, a young engineer, had the focal person job offered to him as a career advancement opportunity:

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<sup>28</sup> Flagship 4 (<http://flagship4.nrrc.org.np/>) and Flagship 5 (<http://flagship5.org.np/>)

<sup>29</sup> "...it was proposed that the system will be called as a focal point instead of a focal person system, in order to avoid personality driven results" (UNDP-Nepal 2015: 5).

*I still remember my Joint Secretary. What he said is “ok, I am sending you to the training related to disaster”. I said at the time, “no, I’m a civil engineer why should I go for this disaster?” He said “you know this disaster is very key thing. You should know what the disaster is and it would be very helpful for your career” ... And now it was very good experience (Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transportation).*

The primary function for Focal Points is to stimulate DRR integration throughout their respective ministry. Focal Points from each ministry were invited to attend and share information on disaster related issues through participation at various coordination meetings hosted by MOHA. Attendance at the coordination meetings was varied:

*I think in one year we met four or five times (Ministry of Energy).*

*On average once a month. MOHA invites us and we will gather and make discussions related to the issues (Ministry of Agricultural Development).*

*One time per three months (Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare).*

Historically, the only time various ministries would be called upon to meet and discuss disaster related issues was during a disaster response as part of the Central Disaster Relief Committee (as required by the *DCR Act*). The Focal Point System established a new mechanism to discuss disasters more broadly and during non-disaster periods:

*...we are also having regular meetings as focal ministries, it is conducting regular meetings of the focal persons regarding any issues, any documents, any capacity building programs, or any action plans or some sort of contingency plans they are developing. They are shared at that meeting and we used to do the information exchange with other Ministries (Ministry of Health and Population).*

In one instance, it was clear that serving as a ministry focal point had made a lasting impression. The respondent was no longer the appointed focal person, but his experience of serving for 2 years and the training he had gained prompted him to share that knowledge more broadly:

*After all this disaster awareness and disaster focal person I learned much more. I wrote the text books of my civil engineering. As a civil engineer we don’t study this disaster management. We only say what is the hazard? (Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transportation).*

One avenue of training for the focal points had been provided by the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC). NASC is an autonomous educational

facility aimed at enhancing public sector capability. Two trainers from NASC, who were involved in the DRM course development and delivery, were interviewed. The respondents described their training role with the focal points:

*Government also have provision to make focal person in each ministry like that and we deal with them. They come for training, and they go back, then a new batch come for training and they go to their places and they work. So, it is a very continuous process. Now you see it has been one of the major agenda for building the public-sector capacity (NASC).*

The NASC respondents had a strong grasp of the concept of mainstreaming DRR:

*So, mainstreaming we have defined, it means that even in each and every development works we have to consider what might be the disaster risk through this development works. Sometimes what happens is that disaster affects the development works and sometimes development works bring disaster as well (NASC).*

The NASC training seemed to be stressing the need for risk reduction approaches to be applied throughout the government. The following story was told by the respondent:

*Interesting thing we met one of the guys yesterday who had been trained in disaster things. And he had been working in a land revenue office now. Generally, what happens is that in Nepal they tell us that when there is a disaster it is the primary responsibility of the MOHA for the rescue and operations and all these things and Ministry of Urban Construction and Physical Planning and Development. But he had been working in the land revenue. But what he said was, after being trained in the disaster things, you know last time when we are proposing the next year's planning. He said that, "Our building is not good in an earthquake. For the DRR and all these things. Let's try to retrofit. What can we do to reduce the risk of this earthquake because our office is very vulnerable?" So, he spoke to the director general, and he said, "Is it really needed?" ... So, you see how an individual, a sensitized individual, can bring the issues to the upper level as well. Even he was proposing something, even though it was very little, he was thinking in line with the DRR things (NASC).*

The NASC respondent's depth of knowledge concerning both DRR and about the public administration challenges facing Nepal indicated that the NASC may be an excellent resource and tool for promoting DRR sector integration and building government capacity. Unfortunately, funding for this training had run out and they had discontinued the course at the time of the pre-earthquake fieldwork. Another disconcerting factor was that the respondent from MOHA was unaware of the mainstreaming DRR expertise that existed at the NASC,

providing evidence that there was a disconnect between the work of MOHA, UNDP and NASC.

*There is a training... we have a staff college a very good training centre. They are teaching very well. But actually, they have not taught about mainstreaming. Actually, we can expedite them at the staff college to have a mainstreaming training in the future (MOHA).*

At the time of fieldwork, the focal point system showed limited signs of being functional. Of the nine respondents who were focal points, two were no longer their Ministry DRR focal point. They had been transferred to other divisions/departments and had not been replaced. Another limiting factor was that most respondents were at the under-secretary rank in the bureaucracy. The respondents at this level did not have the capacity to make decisions on behalf of the Ministry, they could only make suggestions to senior leadership:

*Without good leadership, we cannot do anything. We are not in a decision-making level. We can only suggest to someone. We can't make this decision (MOWCSW).*

Taking into the account the highly centralised and top down ethos of the Nepal administration system meant that decision making comes from Ministers and their appointed Secretaries:

*And what I experienced was that the leader the Secretary who is the apex. So, if those persons who have been given this responsibility of job or in executive position they will suggest them or they, how to say, if this executive person convince these ministries and secretaries in a well way, only then it can be done (MOLRM).*

Findings from a 2015 UNDP evaluation of the focal points also called into question its efficacy. The review stated "...there is a question mark on the very existence of the Focal Point System in Nepal. The discussion with concerned authorities presented a very mixed and contrasting picture" and that "...efforts are still needed to institutionalise this system by the government ministries for its durability and sustainability in the long run (UNDP-Nepal 2015: 8).

### **6.3 How is MOHA responding to the paradigm shift?**

This next section seeks to answer the question of how MOHA is responding to the policy change indicated by mainstreaming DRR. It first examines how MOHA subverted the creation of an executive level National Disaster Management Authority. It then examines a leadership conflict over Flagship 5 that was underway during the period of fieldwork.

### 6.3.1 The Disaster Management Legislation and National Strategy Revisions

In 2008, new legislation had been drafted to replace the antiquated *NCR Act*. It is in MOHA's handling of both this draft legislation and the National Strategy (that was adopted) where it becomes apparent MOHA was subversively resisting policy change. To further contextualise this, several DRM sources outside of the government also disclosed their suspicions that MOHA was reluctant to give up control of the DRM agenda, pointing to its management of the draft *DRM Act* and *National Strategy*. Evidence to substantiate is also found in academic research (Jones et al. 2014), an IFRC report (2011), and again confirmed by this fieldwork.

The main point of contention in both the *National Strategy* and the draft *DRM Act* is the position and the level of autonomy from MOHA that the central National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would be afforded. The global best practice is for the NDMA to be situated high within the politico-administrative hierarchy in order to coordinate 'other sectors' through 'strong leadership':

"The Office or Ministry leading the National Platform for DRR should be a permanent structure that is in a sufficiently high position to coordinate the participation of all relevant partners with a national coordination mandate in disaster risk reduction, disaster management, national planning or environment. **The leading Office or Ministry should have capacity for strong leadership and capacity to coordinate other sectors and leverage political commitment and mobilize resources for and knowledge on DRR**" (UNISDR 2007: 8; emphasis added).

After an extensive consultative process, the first drafts of the *National Strategy* and the DRM legislation proposed that the NDMA be situated under the Prime Minister's Office in line with global best practice. Later government revisions made by MOHA reverted responsibility for the NDMA to MOHA (IFRC 2011; Jones et al. 2014). The changes made by MOHA to the draft legislation had been "substantive" (IFRC 2011: 2) as compared to the initial 2008 version. By all accounts, few outside of MOHA had seen the revised version of the legislation. Jones et al. also reported that, "the status and content of the current draft Act remains unclear" (Jones et al. 2014: 83). Prominent central government

DRR subsystem members—notably the National Planning Commission (NPC)—was asked if they had read the draft DRM act; they had not.

*But I have not seen the draft. But maybe let's see if new Act is coming... What type of institutional mechanism they are provisioning in the new Act...Otherwise it is a very critical issue (NPC).*

The rationale for keeping the draft legislation 'in MOHA' was reputedly because further consultation would slow down the process of getting the legislation through parliament. Scepticism abounds when the draft legislation was already eight years old. When asked about this, the MOHA respondent justified it this way:

*Up to now our planning is to establish NDMA within the MOHA. Because everybody thinks and our legal document also says that MOHA is a focal agency for disaster management. But once it is established and functional then our plan is to change this, maybe direct under the Prime Minister's Office (MOHA).*

It is clear from the above quote that MOHA was capitalising on its legal and cultural precedent within the central government to maintain ownership of disaster management. When asked why MOHA had done this, the respondent affected a caretaker role:

*But initially if you establish under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), maybe they will just lose their way. Because for them it is a totally new organization and they cannot take lead. They will establish under MOHA and they will learn for one or two years and get well set up and after that time it is better point to change from MOHA to Prime Minister Office (MOHA).*

Given the length of time it has taken to get the legislation passed into law, it is highly unlikely the legislation would be amended in short order to situate the NDMA under the PMO. It should also be noted that there was an awareness within other ministries of the need for the NDMA to be located in a high level executive position:

*It [NDMA] would not be aligned with any Ministry, it should be aligned with the Prime Minister so the political leadership will also be there and the reporting of that unit should also go directly to the Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister is responsible and he is the supreme person to take charge of disaster management. Then all other are compelled to do that. So that would be a good idea for the setting up of the new structure in government. If it would be aligned with the MOHA or to any other ministry, then it will not work. The highest political leadership, if it will be there then only it can work effectively (MOHP).*



### 6.3.2 The Politics of Letting Go

Within the NRRC Flagship programme, MOHA is the lead government agency of both flagship 2 (emergency preparedness/response) and flagship 5 (policy/institutional strengthening). Flagship 5 is the flagship with the most influence, since its focus on institutional and policy development outcomes could have the potential to reform Nepal's disaster management institutional arrangements. This section explores the tension that arose when disaster management institutional reforms began to be discussed in Flagship 5.

At the time of fieldwork, the National Planning Commission (an apex authority responsible for developing periodic plans and for approving annual ministry sector plans) was pushing for leadership of Flagship 5. As an apex authority, the NPC had strategic and high-level oversight over all of the ministries, a feature that MOHA lacked. The NPC was incorporating DRM concerns into its 3 and 5-year development plans (see section 5.5.2). NPC's leadership was also backed by non-government Flagship 5 members because it was thought that the NPC had the mandate, capacity, and power to implement mainstreaming DRR. During several informal conversations, it was disclosed that there was conflict within Flagship 5 between MOHA and NPC over the leadership of Flagship 5, which was delaying progress.

One informant felt that "it was the right people in place at the right time" at the NPC to lead on the issue of DRR policy mainstreaming. The respondent for NPC was a joint-secretary who had spent numerous years working in the environment ministry. He had led various Nepal delegations to international climate negotiations and had written several articles on DRM mainstreaming in a government trade publication. He recognised the necessary links that DRR and climate change shared and hoped that both would become mainstreamed into policy:

*We have to consider our development mainstreaming, is what the planning commission is looking to do right now. Is that all this country we try to incorporate into the mainstreaming of our development process where DRR and climate change should be concerned as a key and integral part of the policy (NPC).*

He was well versed in the basic principles and rationale behind cross-sector DRR integration. He identified the ambiguity that comes with international

“jargon”. He noted that mainstreaming is more than policy integration; it involved a deeper process of ‘internalisation’:

*In the international level there is a lot of jargon. Mainstreaming is a very sweet word, but very difficult to define it. What is mainstreaming? What's the impact? .... Mainstreaming means the internalisation of this concept within your planning process (NPC).*

MOHA was questioned about the alleged leadership conflict taking place in Flagship 5. The respondent from MOHA stated that the Ministry was “maybe” willing to hand over responsibility for Flagship 5 in the next phase of the NRRC programmes<sup>30</sup>. The MOHA respondent summarised the conflict in this way:

*And last NRRC meeting the authorities from NPC meeting claim they will lead Flagship 5 because it is a policy issue and we have agreed on that- this is their claim. And we just have communication on that, “ok we will give you this leadership, but not in this phase but maybe in next phase”. Because MOHA is always happy if anyone wants to have some leadership on that. Because disaster management is not just job of MOHA but the job of everybody (MOHA).*

On the surface, the MOHA respondent endorsed the NPC and recognized its suitability for the coordination of mainstreaming DRR within the government:

*At the central level why National Planning Commission is doing because it is a government mandatory organization to formulate three or five-year priority plan. They always develop priority plan. And once they develop priority plan it goes to budget and resources for implementation. So if we start the mainstreaming in the planning process, in the priority plan, if you put so many disaster things there, like if you talk about agriculture then in the agriculture sector you put so many disaster policies inside agriculture and forestry so many disaster things there (MOHA).*

He acknowledged that MOHA was poorly suited to lead development planning initiatives because the Ministry was concerned with front line response rather than development issues:

*Because we are talking about disaster management in development process. Development planning process. MOHA is traditional organization dealing with law and order and peace and security (MOHA).*

He also recognised that MOHA did not have the power to oversee, compel, or monitor other Ministries’ annual plans as to whether DRR was incorporated. This was something the NPC could do:

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<sup>30</sup> At the time of fieldwork NRRCs future was uncertain as its first mandate was drawing to a close. Some thought the NRRC had achieved its objectives and others thought the NRRC should be realigned to focus on new priorities. As of November 2016, NRRCs future had not been determined.

*Because they are producing the plans, programs and budget and at the time of approval it is not coming through the MOHA channel. Because different Ministries have separate identity and separate power balance and they don't have to present their program and budget to MOHA. They can directly go to NPC, directly to MOF for approval and MOF can allocate budget. And no one is asking MOHA for coordination. Because each Ministry has equal status and in that case your job is to coordinate but without any power. Without mandate, without fund, without power. It lacks fund and power to coordination. And because of this reason some preparedness and recovery works is lagging behind.*

The respondent was forthright in declaring NPC's suitability, which makes reconciling his words with the apparent conflict difficult. Informal discussions within the broader DRM subsystem in Nepal, the literature on policy change, and prior research on DRR governance in Nepal all suggested that the respondent had misrepresented MOHA's core policy beliefs, which were to maintain the status quo.

## **6.4 DRR Policy Mainstreaming Framing In The Central Government**

This section answers the question of how DRR policy is framed within the central government. It begins by examining the responses from MOHA and other central level members of the DRM subsystem. It then explores how the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development is framing the DRR policy issue within its ministry.

### **6.4.1 Central Government DRR Policy Frame Disputes**

As discussed above, mainstreaming DRR into national development is a strategic priority of the GON's National Strategy. However, the data reveals a discord between how the National Strategy framed DRR as a cross-sector developmental policy issue with how MOHA was framing DRR in its contact with the Focal Points from other ministries.

In general, the respondents legitimised MOHA's role in disaster management based on what they understood disaster management to entail, specifically technical approaches to response/relief. This is to be expected considering the content and salience of the out-dated NCR Act as well as the global disaster management first-response culture. When asked whether MOHA was the appropriate coordination ministry for DRR one focal point respondent replied:

*Yes, because as far as we are concerned MOHA is responsible for disaster. Let's talk about what MOHA has to respond. MOHA it has Nepal police force. Again, it has the armed police force... helicopters, and trained manpower. These manpower and technicians in case of loss of communication. Our mobiles don't work in disaster... MOHA has VSATs [satellite communication] (MOPIT).*

This quote is illustrative of the way that disaster management policy and practice had been framed by MOHA in the post-HFA/National Strategy environment. The respondent's knowledge of disaster management came from his experience as a DRM focal point and it was through MOHA led events (post National Strategy adoption) that he came to understand disaster policy. MOHA had focused on response training, rather than focusing on DRR sectoral integration:

*So, during my stay in the Ministry we are just exercised, like table top exercise and field level exercise that was conducted by US Army. It was just a simulation exercise (MOPIT).*

This focus on response planning was again confirmed by the Ministry of Children, Women and Social Welfare respondent, who described the content of the focal point meetings attended:

*We discuss 'how to' when come earthquake or flood. And the techniques have been taught to us. How to be safe from disasters... How to work jointly when come disasters. Jointly how to face and cope with disasters (Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare)*

This demonstrates that despite MOHA's declarations of mainstreaming DRR requiring development sectors to integrate DRR, in the meetings it held with other ministries, it continued to reinforce the dominant disaster response policy frame.

However, the belief that disaster management policy only encompassed technical response solutions was not held by all respondents. Opinions changed when respondents had received training from outside of the government. In these cases, respondents were not content to assign MOHA full ownership over the disaster management portfolio and understood the role that their ministry played in enhancing DRR:

*MOHA is always trying to work on the response part, not the mitigation part. They are responsible to use the police and armies for the response. What I feel that is that mitigation is much more important. It is also response is important, but mitigation part is the very much needed activity in Nepal I think. For example, we are trying to retrofit and trying to build awareness in the community by giving the training. It is the mitigation that is very needed activities. So that after that, the mitigation part is much slower. Not given much priority (Department of Education).*

Another example was found in the Ministry of Health and Population respondent, who understood that the Health ministry also played a role in mainstreaming DRR:

*It is very hard for people to make understand that it is MOHA is leading this whole process and it is responsible for the main agency of government but there are roles there for all Ministries. That is what mainstreaming means. MOHA is also working for disaster but not encroaching the response of MOHA, because we have different responsibility within our sector (MOHP).*

Both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health are the GON leads for Flagship 1- school and hospital safety. The respondents themselves were active participants in the broader subsystem that pertained to disaster risk reduction and had gained training from reputable organisations.

#### **6.4.2 Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development**

Despite attempts to subvert central level framing of DRR policy as a cross-sector developmental issue, the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD) is an example of a ministry that had framed DRR as a cross-sector policy problem within its ministry processes. MOFALD is the government lead for Flagship 4 and was actively working to mainstream DRR considerations throughout its ministry which had direct influence at the local level (district/local considerations are discussed in Chapter 7). Unlike MOHA, MOFALD seemed to be 'getting on' with DRR integration in a constructive and practical way. As the ministry responsible for local development it was ideally suited for the task. A division dedicated to DM/DRR existed within the ministry with three full time staff members. Many MOFALD ministry staff had prior experience working at the district and local levels. It was felt this helped them understand the cross-cutting nature of DRR and the importance of incorporating DRR into ministry development planning.

*Yes, disaster risk reduction is the main cross-cutting issue among development partners. All of our ministry colleagues are talking about these issues. Many times. And we are planning jointly these programs. And so many meetings, under DRR where conducted here. Our establishment of the fire department is to sensitize all our colleagues and all of our partner friends. So, we have no problem of DRR sensitization and they all are aware about this issue. So many friends of Ministry are the ex-LDOs and ex-EOs or VDC Secretaries, they already know the realities of this issue (MOFALD).*

MOFALD had also created policy instruments to assist with DRR integration. In 2012, MOFALD had prepared the ubiquitous Local Disaster Risk Management

Plan, a planning document that is found widely throughout Nepal at the local level (see Chapter 7). The ministry had also incorporated DRR tasks into new performance contracts that their staff at the district (Local Development Officer), municipal (Executive Officer), and VDCs (Village Development Secretary) had to commit to. For example, given a two-year time frame the Executive Officer of a municipality had to work to establish land pooling and open space management, building code implementation, and fire brigade (at least one truck with staff) management. They also had created Minimum Conditions and Performance Measures (MCPM). These were a set of guidelines that local bodies needed to meet. Their performance in certain areas, including a few regarding DRR, was tied to the level of funding they would receive.

During the pre-earthquake interview, the respondent was busy formulating a national fire policy in order to enhance fire response capacity throughout Nepal. It was essential that the policy quickly became institutionalised before a change of government occurred and for funding purposes.

*Our Joint Secretary, Secretary, and Deputy Prime Ministry preference is in this field. So we quickly studied to establish this department and the [fire] report is already prepared. And soon we are planning and organizing a small workshop in our ministry and briefing them about progress about studies. And after that we are planning to coordinate our line agencies like Ministry of Finance and Ministry of General Administration to arrange all the things (MOFALD).*

While the efficacy of MOFALD's efforts to integrate DRR throughout its Ministry processes are not evaluated here, this discussion is an example of a ministry that has internally framed DRR policy as a cross-sector responsibility. In this instance, mainstreaming DRR was spurred on by high level political support and with the assistance of a bureaucratic staff that could see the utility of such measures. MOFALD was establishing a new policy area within the ministry, which at this point in time was not viewed to be in conflict with existing policies.

The above discussion reviewed how the respondents framed the policy problem of mainstreaming DRR. There is evidence that MOHA is actively reinforcing the traditional disaster management/response policy frame. However, as awareness was growing of DRR there are signs that there is a growing movement within the GON to challenge the *status quo* and generate some of the conditions required for Hall's (1993) third order policy change discussed in Chapter 3. This is significant because it suggests that that within the GON there is a weak—yet

emerging—advocacy coalition (Chapter 3) around DRR developing within the central government. The next section will examine this contention in more detail.

## **6.5 The Policy Subsystem and Advocacy Coalition Building**

Despite MOHA's efforts to prevent policy change, there is evidence to suggest a growing awareness and activity level related to DRR in some of the ministries. This suggests that an emerging coalition may be forming within the GON. This section examines what is driving the advocacy coalitions development and outlines the reported activities the various ministries are engaging in.

### **6.5.1 Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium**

The NRRC was having an appreciable effect on coalition building within the GON. It is clear that participating in the NRRC was strengthening awareness and ownership of DRR policy. This is evidenced throughout earlier sections of this chapter by the responses from the lead Ministries of the flagship programmes (e.g. Health, Education, MOFALD), which all frame DRR as a cross-sector policy problem in which their ministry was a stakeholder. Without NRRC's facilitation, it is highly unlikely that a mechanism for mainstreaming DRR (flagships 4 and 5) would exist at all. But most importantly, it was raising several Ministry profiles and encouraging ownership of DRM issues that previously had been the purview of only MOHA.

### **6.5.2 National Planning Commission**

The NPC is included as a driver of DRR coalition building because it had begun to promote DRR integration within ministries through its inclusion of DRR considerations into its periodic plans. The NPC establishes the long-term development priorities for Nepal in period plans that range from three, five, and seven year plans. Since the GON began formulating periodic plans in 1956, there have been nine five-year plans and four three-year plans. To date, there has never been a seven-year plan drafted as this would require a sustained period of political stability that is unrealistic in a Nepal context. At the time of the first fieldwork visit, the GON was operating within the 13<sup>th</sup> periodic plan (covering a three-year period 2012-2015). In this 13<sup>th</sup> periodic plan, a commitment had been made to resourcing DRR.

“While the 10th three-year plan prioritized DRR at the policy level, implementation and budget allocation did not begin until the 13th three-year plan. This highlights the lag between policy and planning and resource allocation for implementation” (GON 2015: 9).

The periodic plans set out targets and development goals for the government, which in reality are rarely achieved, but indicate a capacity within the government for strategic planning.

Respondents indicated an awareness of the inclusion of DRR into the national development plans:

*The National Planning Commission has included disaster risk management this time in its 13th 3-year plan. This issue was not in the priorities of the National Planning Commission before and hence was not included in any of the plans. It has defined the roles and responsibilities of the different ministries in that sector. We will implement the things that we have committed to do for this sector (Ministry of Industry).*

This is significant, because within the GON the NPC is well positioned to compel ministry adoption of mainstreaming DRR. The NPC is responsible “for formulating a national vision, periodic plans and policies for development” (NPC 2016: Online). The NPC is influential for two reasons: 1) it is chaired by the Prime Minister with the Finance Secretary as an ex-officio member; 2) it provides economic guidelines and priorities for all line ministries; “almost all economic development and economic policies and programmes come into force either at the initiative of the Commission or on its advice or recommendations” (NPC 2016: Online).

### **6.5.3 Donor Funding and DRR Coalition Building**

Perhaps the most influential driver of DRR coalition building within Ministries was the new donor money attached to the issue of DRR. In a sort of symbiotic relationship, respondents indicated that donor funds were contingent on the ministry showing leadership on DRR. For example, funding for the MOFALD DRR initiatives specified above went into the Local Governance Community Development Programme (LGCDP) fund ‘basket’. MOFALD also discussed the importance of institutionalising programmes in order to gain funding.

*These activities [discussing the Performance Contract requirements for LDOs and EOs] are performed under LGCDP provides funds to act on these activities. All the donors are in MOFALD, under this Ministry. All the donors give first the budget in a single basket and we plan our local level plan and we transfer the money to them and separate sector we also manage the budget from government side also (MOFALD).*



*If we are not establishing an institution, nobody can support us. Firstly, if we establish our department then after that many organizations wanted to help us. And they wanted to work with this [fire] sector. So we are planning quickly to establish fire department. After that our donor partners, our communities, they are asking us how we provide you support for capacity development mainly. They are asking us rapidly (MOFALD).*

This was also seen in the Department of Education which was the coordinator for Flagship 1 on school safety:

*...the main development partners, like Asian Development Bank, Government of Australia, DFID, in our ministry World Bank, JICA which contribute to the pool fund. They have been contributing directly or indirectly to make our schools safe. If the leadership of the Ministry of Education is not there, then all the donor development partners cannot get together to put their money in the same basket fund, and to utilize that fund, to construct our school building or other structures and all retrofitting works (Ministry of Education).*

Although not part of the NRRC, the respondent from the Ministry of Agricultural Development also highlighted the importance of donor involvement.

*In our Nepalese case we are lucky enough that a number of donor agencies and number of development partners and foreign countries are assisting us in focusing on DRR programs. That is why we are very much helped by the various program given by our donors. So only important thing is to coordinate the fund and to make well planned and to make effective programs and implement them is our challenge (Ministry of Agricultural Development).*

In the case of the Ministry of Irrigation- Department of Water Induced Disaster Management, donor funding from JICA was no longer available as it was deemed the GON had gained enough capacity to manage on its own. However, the ministry was struggling to cope with the added pressure created by a changing climate.

*Previously in the field of disaster, completely it was JICA support of the department. And this time they thought now we don't need to help the government because we are established about disaster. But this time we are facing the climate change induced disasters. That is why again we are going to contact JICA for these things. They are also interested in help and support for these things. Right now. And we contact to World Bank also interested to fund... (DWIDM).*

From the data derived there is evidence that donor funding was incentivising DRR coalition building within sector ministries. Without 'baskets' and programmes related to DRR the funding would not be available.

## 6.5.4 DRR Subsystem Involvement

The thirteen central level ministries/departments interviewed have been subjectively sorted by their level of engagement<sup>31</sup> based on the awareness level of the respondent, the DRR activities they reported, and the level of staff-time dedicated to address DRR issues. Table 6-3 is an overview based on the interview responses, it is not a comprehensive evaluation of government activities.

*Table 6-3. DRR Activities Across the Central Government*

DRR Activity Level	Government Body	Activities/Justifications
Medium Engagement	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most active ministry in internalising DRR throughout ministry operations.</li> <li>- Flagship 4 government lead</li> <li>- Inclusion of DRR indicators in LDO and EO performance contracts</li> <li>- Full time staff dedicated to DM and DRR issues</li> <li>- Working on improving overall governance at district and local levels (through Urban and District Governance Experts)</li> <li>- Good working relationship with MOSTE to implement Environment-friendly Local Governance Framework</li> <li>- National fire policy in development</li> <li>- Developed the Local Disaster Risk Management Plan- widely distributed at the local level.</li> </ul>
	Ministry of Agricultural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recently created a division within the MOAD planning section dedicated to DRR initiatives.</li> <li>- Active in DRR subsystem meetings.</li> <li>- DRR activities are stimulated by food security concerns &amp; annual economic losses due to disasters.</li> </ul>
	National Planning Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Included DRR into Periodic Plans to help stimulate sector line adoption</li> <li>- Active participant in Flagship 5, Chair of DRM Mainstreaming Technical Working Group.</li> </ul>
	Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working on Climate Change Adaptation</li> <li>- Good working relationship with MoFALD to implement the Environment-friendly Local Governance Framework at the local level.</li> <li>- Budget code for CCA established.</li> </ul>
	Ministry of Irrigation- (Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full time work on flood and landslide risk reduction</li> <li>- Flagship 3 lead</li> </ul>
Medium-Low Engagement	Ministry of Home Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Held coordination meeting for Focal Points and active in activities related to DM</li> </ul>

<sup>31</sup> High level engagement was purposively left off as none of the ministries were investing adequate resources for DRR.

DRR Activity Level	Government Body	Activities/Justifications
		- Did not see DRR as necessary for MOHA to integrate within Ministry
	Ministry of Education- (Department of Education)	- Technical division concerned with safer school construction. Lead on Flagship 1. - DRR integration efforts throughout Ministry lacking. - Efforts underway to incorporate DRR considerations in new Education Act.
	Ministry of Health and Population	- Flagship 1 lead - developed standards on resilient hospital construction - training provided by Ministry to staff on DRM - Very small number of staff responsible for DRR coordination in Ministry.
Low Engagement	Ministry of Land Reform and Management	- Piloting a project on land reform. Concerned about population displacements and environmental degradation. - project includes land use and hazards mapping
	Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transportation	- Prepositioning of heavy equipment to clear roads during rainy season when landslides are expected - No specific budgeting for DRR in road construction.
	Ministry of Industry	- Very little DRR awareness. Only recently engaged as focal point. - Conducted environmental impact assessments for new industry - developing fire protocols for industrial sites - No other integration of DRR into ministry operations - Indicated a willingness to integrate DRR policy into sector planning, based on NPC requirements
No Engagement	Ministry of Energy	- Very little awareness of DRR. - No integration of DRR into ministry operations
	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare	- Involved in response efforts as Protection Cluster lead. - Little awareness of DRR - No integration of DRR into ministry operations.

(Source: the author)

As seen in the above table, there is a growing level of involvement from ministries- beyond that of MOHA- in DRR. Although the efficacy of this involvement is not assessed, it does indicate that awareness is building in ministries outside of MOHA. The main driver of this is unquestionably the new donor money available for DRR initiatives which was spurring ministries like MOFALD to create institutional mechanisms. Another driver is the NRRC, which was facilitating ministry ownership of DRR issues. The data captured through the interviews also points to the influence of the NRRC in stimulating this involvement.

## 6.6 The Complexity of Change in Nepal

This section presents data that helps to answer the overarching question of whether mainstreaming DRR is rhetoric or a substantive change agenda. The following data was gleaned inadvertently from two of the respondents who were leading development programmes and projects that were peripherally related to DRR. It was striking how they described the efforts they were putting into making their projects succeed and the challenge of working within the Nepali bureaucracy. This greatly contrasted with the level of effort MOHA was putting into the mainstreaming DRR agenda. Although their discussion is about programme/projects and not specifically about policy change, the programme/projects under implementation would produce significant change in land-usage and urban development behaviours. In addition, their programme/projects required cross-sector engagement and so their insights are highly relevant for the overall discussion.

In the programme/project planning stage, valuable insights were provided into the level of effort required. One of the respondents expressed a view that coordination efforts needed to happen at a much earlier planning stage than was typical in the government:

*Planning before implementation.... In most of the problems is the issue of coordination. Because this coordination is taking place only at the implementation level. Not at the planning level (Anonymous).*

It was also apparent that a great deal of effort was put into gaining senior bureaucrat and political party support at the early stages of the programme/project. One respondent spoke about his efforts to gain cross-ministerial support for his project:

*Because in bringing and realizing the \*\*\* project I did a lot of tasks. Much effort. I went to Minister of Forest, Minister of Agriculture. I convinced the authorities of agricultural ministry and it was very difficult to build a project in an integrated way for different Ministries with different jobs. But still we were able to do that. In the last meeting, the most important aspect that they praised was that co-ordination is very fine (Anonymous).*

And the other respondent spoke to the need to gain political party support for his programme/project:

*So immediately after that these elections were declared—the parliamentary elections. So, then I prepared a 5 point issues to be addressed in the manifesto of the major political parties and I shared this*

*with 8 political parties. And you will be surprised to know that two major political parties have combined 2 different issues that I had requested them to be included and included them in their political manifesto... And before that, immediately after the election when these 15 members of parliament were elected I was the first one to have interaction with them. ..So we had a one day discussion with them and then I prepared all these documents based on the interactions and feedbacks. And then we tried to include and mobilize all these 15 members of parliament elected... So I was successful in having some of the issues in the national plans and policies read out by the President. And then similarly I met the Minister of Finance before he prepared his budget and then I went through the support of the Members of Parliament to include certain critical items to be funded by the government... (Anonymous).*

Both respondents came across as politically astute and clearly conveyed that without high level buy-in of their proposed programme/projects, success would be unlikely. Political party support is a pivotal component for development projects in Nepal and is further discussed in later chapters. One of the respondents recognized that his non-partisan approach was a strength:

*I am not political savvy. But because I don't carry any party flag, I have the strength to talk to go and talk to any politician (Anonymous).*

Another topic area that both respondents commented on was the difficulty of working in a cross-sector and coordinated manner in Nepal. As one of the respondents explained:

*...so I said "we are also doing a land use plan and why not for this project develop a flood map of the project area?" So the answer is- one ministry says it's my job, the other ministry says it's my job, we say it's our job, but it's the job for the people. So somewhere the feeling is that one ministry might have projected itself into the scope of the other ministry. That could be one psychological problem.... And in this project work and coordination task one other important problem I have felt is overlapping of job. For example, agricultural and forestry have some overlapping in their activities. So sometimes there is a tug of war over who will complete this job, which is the problem (Anonymous).*

Likely, coordinated planning at an earlier project stage would have prevented ministry bickering about job responsibilities. The second respondent provided a possible explanation for why inter-ministerial coordination was a challenge:

*So I think within the government system this is a problem. The inter-agency competition. Who will influence the project and who will get the credit? ...There is this competition and the competition is how you get more budget and how you become visible. How you get the benefit out of that budget. (Anonymous)*

Presumably the respondent is referring to donor funding, since GON project funding is extremely limited. This comment is reminiscent of the earlier discussion (section 6.5.3) about donor funding driving leadership and DRR advocacy coalition building. However, here funding is seen as a negative influence that sparks competition between the ministries. This competitive environment may also be a cultural and historical remnant of the *panji* land granting system (see Chapter 4) that fostered a competitive environment in the bureaucracy.

While the efficacy of their programme/project efforts are unknown, their discussion is an acknowledgment that Nepali bureaucrats understand implementing projects requires a sustained and politically targeted approach. Their discussion of the complexity of steering such tasks, when contrasted against the mechanisms that were in place to steer mainstreaming DRR in Nepal, are suggestive that the MOHA led mainstreaming DRR efforts are superficial at best. Despite the rhetoric in the National Strategy and from MOHA, it clearly lacked the basic hallmarks that project implementation required. Most tellingly, there were no indications of inciting broad based political support for the agenda, which is discussed in Chapter 8, is a necessary component of Nepal bureaucratic politics.

## **6.7 Earthquake Post-Script**

Upon returning to Nepal a year after the earthquake, not much was found in the way of mainstreaming DRR progress. Earthquake recovery was the primary focus for government respondents, and the earthquake seemed to have no discernible effects as a focusing event for changing the dominant policy paradigm.

One notable change had occurred within the NRRC Flagship 5. MOHA partially fulfilled its commitment to the NPC and handed responsibility for DRM mainstreaming over in 2015; the first DRM mainstreaming Technical Support Group (TSG) meeting was held on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and was chaired by NPC. A subsequent meeting was held on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. However, the momentum of October 2015 quickly ended and at the time of writing (October 2016) no further meetings had been held. The reason given for this was that the NPC Joint-Secretary was tied up with the drafting of the 14<sup>th</sup> 3-year periodic

plan. Also, government priorities had shifted and all efforts were on earthquake recovery (despite progress on rebuilding or financial recompense being abysmal and the initial TGS meetings were held post-earthquake). As discussed above initially the NPC was pushing for leadership of Flagship 5 as its work related to policy development and mainstreaming. MOHA maintained control over Flagship 5 and the NPC was chair of a technical working group within the flagship. But the tension had been resolved.

The NPC respondent originally interviewed during the pre-earthquake fieldtrip had retired and his replacement was leading the TSG. It was disclosed that the source of tension during the pre-earthquake fieldwork had been precipitated by the former NPC respondent who strongly pushed MOHA to hand over responsibility for DRM mainstreaming and policy development. This seems plausible; the original NPC respondent had provided the researcher with several articles he had written for a Nepal magazine on the topic of DRM mainstreaming. In one of the articles he frankly opined that DRR inclusion in the 11<sup>th</sup> periodic plan resulted in “no significant progress...” His prior work within the government on climate change adaptation had primed him and was well versed in the international policy prescriptions concerning DRR and CCA. He was what the policy literature terms a *policy entrepreneur*, that is a person “who seek[s] to initiate dynamic policy change” (Mintrom 1997: 739). His replacement exhibited none of the drive to push the agenda; he had been promoted from a non-disaster or climate change related role from the tourism ministry. The tension between the NPC and MOHA had subsided but it appeared that the DRR mainstreaming agenda was suffering in its dissipation. In the post-earthquake context, no discernible pressure was being exerted on MOHA in regard to mainstreaming DRR.

## **6.8 Chapter Summary**

The overarching question driving this chapter was whether or not mainstreaming DRR was being used by the Government of Nepal as rhetoric or as a substantial policy prescription for change. What was found was that the concept of mainstreaming DRR was being used by MOHA to give the illusion of change in policy but that there was a clear disconnect between what MOHA was saying publically about mainstreaming DRR and its actions. For instance, the respondent from MOHA was quite clear during the interview that in the context

of mainstreaming DRR, MOHA wanted other ministries to incorporate disaster policy into their development processes, to such an extent that it would make a central led disaster management policy redundant. In other words, for the sake of reducing the risk of disaster, MOHA was working itself out of a job. DRR was also framed in the National Strategy as a cross-sector development policy. However, underneath the rhetorical force of MOHA's policy stance, the reality was that MOHA was subverting any and all efforts of meaningful change. This was evidenced by MOHA rewriting the draft legislation in order to prevent the proposed National Disaster Management Authority from being strategically located in the Prime Minister's Office. This was also evidenced in the way MOHA was framing DRR as the focal point lead to other ministries and in its reluctance to hand over Flagship 5 to the NPC.

This conclusion has several consequences for this research. Firstly, it ties in with the literature review discussion of the nature of neoliberal buzzwords (see Chapter 2). It is now possible to see how global policy prescriptions like mainstreaming and DRR become a part of the Government of Nepal's development lexicon- in this case it was through the HFA and donors. As discussed, mainstreaming is highly problematic as a global policy prescription because of its empty and vague buzzword status. When a global 'buzzword' is appropriated by the GON it is easily used to manipulate and distort the policy environment. This supports what Loughlin (2002) argued in Chapter 2 that modern public administration "privileges rhetoric over reality" (Loughlin 2002: 231), which is a detriment to thorough and sound policy decision making. This is also further justification of why global policy prescriptions used for disaster risk reduction policy need to be critically examined.

The second consequence is that MOHA has done very little to promote mainstreaming DRR throughout the government. However, there was a growing awareness throughout the ministries that DRR is a cross-sector responsibility. This seems to suggest that an advocacy coalition (as discussed in the Advocacy Coalition Framework in Chapter 3) is forming within the central government. Also from the information gleaned from the central level respondents, it is becoming apparent that an increased awareness of DRR was having an appreciable effect on respondent's outlook on disaster policy. With greater awareness of DRR, respondents were not content to let MOHA control the disaster policy agenda (e.g. as found in the responses from the NPC, MOHP,



MOFALD, and MOE). Based only on the central level findings, it is too early in this research to map out the Advocacy Coalition Framework or to fully appreciate the role of social learning may be playing in shifting the policy dynamic. For that, a better understanding is needed of what is happening at the lower levels of the government administration. That is the focus of the next chapter, which will examine what effect, if any, the policy prescription of mainstreaming DRR was having at the district and local levels.

## 7 The Reality of Mainstreaming DRR at the District and Local Level

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### 7.1 Introduction

The story of mainstreaming DRR in Nepal continues in this chapter with a look at the district and local levels. While the central government in Kathmandu Valley continued to spin its rhetoric around mainstreaming DRR across its central level ministries, flush with donor money and hidden behind the walls of Singha Durbar, vertical (i.e. district and local level) realization of DRR was tenuous at best. The reality is that it is at the district and local levels where DRR is needed most. As one respondent reported:

*Our VDC [Village Development Committee] is one of those at very high disaster risk... There is a gap in the embankments in the upper part of Manau [name of VDC]. The river has changed its course with time and has started flowing from the gaps in the embankments (Bardiya, VDC Secretary).*

As discussed, the district and local political administrative levels are highly problematic in Nepal because of the absence of elected political representatives. However, this is only one factor impeding DRR implementation. Historically, local level governance has never been strong in Nepal. In spite of the decentralisation granted by the Local Self Governance Act (1999), the attendant funding and resourcing of local government entities has never been in place. As explained by the Asia Foundation:

“...the LSGA unleashed unprecedented expectations and quickly faced difficulties in implementation, particularly due to the capacity crunch at the

local level, disjointed planning, and the onset of conflict. As a result, the LSGA became a repository of unfunded mandates rather than an enabling instrument for local bodies to take control of their affairs” (The Asia Foundation 2012: i).

Since no substantive policy was implemented at the central government level to address the issue of mainstreaming DRR, it is not surprising that little was found at either the district or local levels. As a result, this chapter is not just about mainstreaming DRR as it is traditionally conceived of as a top down process (e.g. as outlined by Lafferty and Hovden (2003) in Chapter 2). Instead, this chapter is concerned with formulating an analysis of what barriers and opportunities exist for DRR policy integration and thus in limiting any resultant paradigm policy change. An intriguing case study was uncovered in Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City (LSMC). Here were indications that the municipality was open to DRR integration. LSMC is an important case study because both Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier (1993) and Candel and Biesbroek (2016) argue that local actors are frequently the source of innovation and thus are an important component of advocacy coalitions and policy integration.

The overarching question guiding this chapter is to identify what was enabling or preventing DRR policy integration from occurring in district and local governments in the fieldwork sites. In order to uncover this, a series of sub-questions are addressed.

1. To what extent is mainstreaming DRR filtering down from the central to the district level/local level?
2. What did district and local level government staff report as the main challenges and barriers to implementing DRR work?
3. What is different about Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City (LSMC) and why was it more conducive for DRR policy integration?

The data for this chapter was derived from interviews held in three districts (Lalitpur, Bardiya, and Solukhumbu). Where possible, interviews were held across divisions in the District Development Offices, the municipality, and Village Development Offices in each district. This is not a comparison of the districts rather examples are drawn from across the field sites to give a composite overview of the diversity of district and local level realities in Nepal.

## 7.2 Review of District and Local Level responsibilities

Figure 7-1 is a review of the district, municipal and VDC responsibilities as per the Local Self-Governance Act.

*Figure 7-1. Functions of Local Administrative Bodies in Nepal*

The Village Development Committee is responsible for 48 functions under 11 headings: agriculture, rural drinking water, construction and transport, education and sports, irrigation, soil erosion and river control, physical development, health, forest and environment, language and culture, tourism and cottage industry, and some others under the heading 'miscellaneous'.

Municipalities have 68 different functions. These include finance, physical development, water resources, environment, and sanitation, education, sports and culture, works and transport, health, social welfare, industry and tourism and under the heading 'miscellaneous'. In addition, it has 13 'optional' functions.

Likewise, the LSGA specifies 48 functions of the District Development Committee: agriculture, rural drinking water and settlement development, power, works and transport, land reforms and land management, women and disadvantaged people, forest and environment, education and sports, wage labour, irrigation, soil erosion control and river training, information and communication, language and culture, cottage industry, health and tourism.

(Source: The Asia Foundation 2012: 59).

## 7.3 Central Level DRR Policy Found at the District and Local Levels

Amongst the rhetoric of mainstreaming DRR across ministries at the central level, the intention is for ministries to integrate DRR vertically down into their district development work. Lafferty and Hovden suggest that vertical integration of environmental policy integration entails sectors forming an environmentally "prudent decision-making premise in their work" (Lafferty and Hovden 2003: 12). In no instance did the district or local bodies meet Lafferty and Hovden's criteria. The extent to which *any* central level DRR policy was filtering down into the district/local levels is the focus of this section. It first examines what was found in the specific district line agencies (e.g. Education, Health, Agriculture and Women, Children and Social Welfare), and then examines MOFALD and its district and local level efforts to integrate DRR through the District Development Office.

The only example of DRR policy from either of the Flagship 1 leads (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health and Population) was found within the District Education Offices. The blueprints for new school designs were developed by the central level in the Department of Education. The earthquake resilient designs were then provided to the district offices.

*The ministry has defined the same structural design for the schools throughout the country. The ministry has published a booklet explaining the estimation of bar, the arrangement of reinforcement, the mapping and drawing and the construction design. Our work is to apply that on the field (Solukhumbu, District Education Office).*

This was the extent of DRR policy transmission found within the districts (i.e. there was no specialized training for teachers nor was disaster preparedness apart of the curriculum for students, in either Solukhumbu or Bardiya). From the District Health Offices, it was unknown by both respondents whether building blueprints with seismic reinforcing had been filtered down to the district level for health post construction. Nonetheless, none of the central planning initiatives discussed by the Ministry respondent (Chapter 6) had filtered down to either of the two districts. The district received policy related to health emergencies (i.e. epidemics, pandemics), but nothing related to disaster management plans or policy.

Returning to the issue of the school building designs, it was noted by both respondents that the design specifications created difficulty for district level implementation. The Bardiya District Education Officer commented on the designs being earthquake but not flood resilient. The 2014 Karnali floods had damaged 92 schools in the district. Although the structures were only minimally damaged, the flood waters destroyed most of the teaching materials and classroom resources.

*There are some gaps in our policies. For an instance, if the schools in this region were constructed keeping floods in mind, there would not have been so much destruction. In the places like Bardiya which are at high risk of floods, the buildings have to be constructed in a different way. That has to be included in the national policy. The buildings that are constructed here are like those constructed in the hills and the cities, that never experience floods (Bardiya District Education Office).*

In the mountainous district, the respondent from the District Education Office was facing another set of challenges related to constructing the central blueprints:

*It is very difficult to work here first due to the uneven geographical condition. Secondly, we cannot dig deep into the earth due to the lack of machineries and equipment. Thirdly, there are unskilled manpower who don't have enough practice. We have to go from time to time to the construction sites and watch if they are doing the work the right way. All these are creating difficulties in our work (Solukhumbu District Education Office).*

It should be noted that the Solukhumbu District Education Office respondent was a sub-engineer who himself had never received training on how to construct seismic reinforced buildings.

In the remaining district line agencies (e.g. Women, Children and Social Welfare and Agricultural Development) there were again few indications that central DRR policy was filtering down to the district levels. Both the respondents from the MWCSW acknowledged their role in the response focused district disaster relief committee as the cluster leads for protection. And the Agricultural District Offices were focused on food security issues, which is associated with DRR. As found in Chapter 6, the Ministry of Agricultural Development had a newly established DRR division within the ministry planning section. Perhaps with time, more specific DRR policy will make its way to the district levels.

The best examples of DRR policy filtering from central to district/local levels were found in the work that MOFALD (Flagship 4 lead) had done. For example, a MOFALD DRR initiative that was being implemented at the local level was that of local capacity building for municipal fire brigades.

*The ministry has allocated some budget for fire station and vehicle and fire fighter for all these things (Solukhumbu, Local Development Officer).*

The Executive Officers of Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City (LSMC) and Guleryia (Bardiya) acknowledged this work but as they already had a small fire brigade they did not qualify for more funding.

Another ubiquitous example of MOFALD's DRR work was the Local Disaster Risk Management Plan (LDRMP), published in 2011. Its bright pink cover was seen in many local government offices. Written in both Nepali and English, in 84 pages the LDRMP outlines a comprehensive approach to formulating a DRM plan. LSMC was using it to formulate their ward and municipal plans. When asked if it was fit for purpose, the LSMC Disaster Management Section Head replied:

*We are trying to make it successful. But my observation is that it is sufficient. When we are working with this guideline, it is very effective. But the problem is how to fulfil our work in this guideline? That is the main thing (LSMC Disaster Management).*

As discussed in the previous chapter, MOFALD has instituted several initiatives aimed at promoting DRR integration through its ministry bureaucrats that held senior positions in the district and local administrative levels. These bureaucrats were required to sign a performance contract that stipulated a few DRM conditions. The LDOs and Executive Officers that were interviewed understood this initiative and seemed supportive of its objectives.

*That's a good thing and I heartily appreciate the performance contract agreement... This focuses on result-oriented management. Until now we were only process oriented. We should not be just process oriented but the results should also be seen in the public. We have 264 indicators that the ministry has designated. If those indicators are not met, I shall be liable to punishments. Therefore, I should either work effectively or should quit the position of LDO. This also means I have to be able to make the people under me work effectively. Our ministry (MOFALD) is only the ministry in Nepal to do this kind of agreement and we are very proud of that (Bardiya LDO).*

*Major things to be done by the Executive Officer while working here. These are incorporated in the agreement. I have signed recently, two months ago. This is the first time there is a performance contract with Ministry. Within the performance contract there is one point related to risk management. We should adapt many measures to minimize the earthquake risk or other risk necessary plan should be formulated to cope with that risk. That is the risk management plan (LSMC, Executive Officer).*

What is encouraging about this approach, is that MOFALD had taken a less technocratic approach to DRR integration than what was found with the Ministry of Education for example. The extent of the Ministry of Education's approach was the transfer of technical building specifications to districts, whereas MOFALD was attempting to change employee behaviours through the performance contract, a much more difficult endeavour to achieve. While its effectiveness is not evaluated here, it had raised DRR's profile amongst the senior MOFALD staff in the district and local levels. The challenge for the LDO and Executive Officer was to get DRR policy integrated into the development programmes and projects in the district and local levels. Some of these challenges and barriers are the focus of section 7.4.

Unexpectedly, disaster management/DRR was found at the district level in relation to work occurring on environmental governance. It was being facilitated in cooperation with the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment (MOSTE) and MOFALD through the district development office. In comparison with the issue of DRR, climate change adaptation (CCA) mechanisms for implementation were more robust from top to bottom. For example, the Prime Minister heads the Climate Change Council and the National Planning Commission has established a Climate Change budget code for all ministries. Both a National Adaption Plan of Action and a Local Adaption Plan of Action had been endorsed. The central level oversight for CCA policy was within MOSTE. MOSTE had no mechanisms for local level implementation, so it channelled funds through MOFALD to implement policy at the district and local levels.

*... 80% of budget [related to CCA] should go to the field. We can only invest 20% budget in administrative or some other things, 80% has to send to the field. And side by side we have the national climate change support program in the Ministry. We have a very small unit here. The whole budget we send to MOFALD. And they implement the budget (MOSTE).*

To this end, there was a staff person in the District Development Office responsible for Energy, Climate Change and Disaster Management. According to one respondent, the disaster management portfolio was a new addition to the job title and no work had yet been completed. At the time of the interviews, district staff were piloting a programme within the Village Development Committees called the Environment-friendly Local Governance (EFLG) Framework 2013. One of the objectives of the framework is:

*“To mainstream issues related to environment, climate change adaptation and disaster management in the local planning process” (MOFALD 2013: 7).*

Because the Energy, Climate Change and Disaster Management staff in the District Development Office mainly discussed alternative energy strategies and CCA in their interviews, it was a surprising to later find DRR content in the EFLG during a desk review of the document. This document set out a list of indicators to be used by districts, municipalities and VDCs. The indicators used in the EFLG matched those of the Minimum Conditions and Performance Measurement Guidelines (discussed earlier in 6.4.2) that local governments had to fulfil. In terms of disaster management, it makes reference to the ubiquitous Local Disaster Risk Management Plan published by MOFALD and the establishment of DRM committees. All told, it appeared to be a simple tool for



both DRR and CCA integration at the local level. However, the EFLG appears to be another technocratic exercise with little additional resourcing to support its objectives and implementation. That it was not widely touted at the central level as an example of mainstreaming DRR at the local level is puzzling but is further evidence that DRR is poorly coordinated amongst central government ministries like MOSTE, MOHA, and MOFALD. It also demonstrates that DRR is not being prioritized at the district/local levels even though it is a key component of the EFLG Framework.

## **7.4 Challenges and Barriers to integrating DRR work throughout the District and Local Levels**

As outlined in Chapter 4, Nepal's public administration is rife with corruption and largely unable to meet the social and economic needs of the country.

Unsurprisingly, there are many challenges identified by respondents as barriers to mainstreaming DRR. A majority of the respondents were well considered and informed about the ills plaguing the Nepal bureaucracy. In order to present the main challenges/barriers, each have been sorted into three main categories: capacity and resource, political, and institutional and cultural barriers. Most of the challenges discussed here are problems that impact the bureaucracy generally and are not particular to mainstreaming DRR and policy change.

However, it is in these general barriers where the difficulty also lies in changing district and local level policy paradigm from that of response to DRR. It goes without saying that one of the greatest impediments for DRR integration at the district/lower levels is the absence of legislation and policy to guide and compel it. The absence of a functional institutional mechanism for integrating DRR is summarized by the LDO Solukhumbu:

*This area, the disaster area, is centrally managed by MOHA. You know that our national system is mainly concentrated on relief. Since 3 or 4 years then they have just shifted directives to DRR... Basically until now, the central and the other local bodies all are concentrated on the relief only. And there is no, I mean I don't want to say no mechanism, but we haven't mainstreamed all the disaster portion in our old development books. That's the reality in the local bodies. So I think that it is basically new term for us. For the local bodies, because we have allocated our budgets to different areas for example to the women, seniors, other marginalized people like this. But specially we haven't allocated in DRR in system to any funds, until now. So that's the way. So we have not able to mainstream DRR system in our local bodies (SoluKhumbu LDO).*

Whilst the following discussion is not a comprehensive review of all the bureaucratic difficulties in Nepal, it does provide an interesting insight into what district and local level bureaucrats understood as challenges and barriers.

## **7.4.1 Capacity and Resource Barriers**

### **7.4.1.1 Funding**

Not surprisingly in a least developed country like Nepal, funding was identified by respondents as a significant barrier.

*The main challenge is the lack of funds and resources (Bardiya LDO).*

*Even though some budget is allocated to the local level, it's not effective to carry out projects (Bardiya VDC).*

Unlike CCA discussed above, DRR had no budget code attached to it. However, funding could be prioritized for disaster recovery and relief; therefore, the funding mechanisms around disasters issues are maintaining the status quo and preventing policy paradigm change. As a respondent from the District Education Office describes:

*Every year after our programs has been approved from the higher level, a Program Implementation Directive (PID) is made. After the PID is made, we publish the indicator for every school. There is a provision in the PID for giving more priority to the disaster affected schools. In case there is a need of construction or reconstruction of disaster affected schools, we have a fund at the regional level which can then be sanctioned for that (Solukhumbu District Education Office).*

Budget and funding constraints meant that bureaucrats were rarely able to meet public demands:

*We cannot address all the demand raised by public related to development activities. We have a limited budget but unlimited demand of the people. So we have to compromise with the demand... we implement very few projects because we have limited budget. But people are not satisfied with the limited expenditure because their needs are very high (LSMC EO).*

*When we compare with the resource available to us, this is probably more than 50 times bigger demand, compared to their resources. It is quite difficult for us to manage this demand (Solukhumbu LDO).*

This suggests that decision makers at the district and local levels are having to prioritize DRR considerations amongst a myriad of pressing development issues.

#### **7.4.1.2 Staffing Shortages**

Even more than funding, another significant issue discussed by six respondents were the routine staffing shortages that were made more acute during times of disaster response. This was most apparent in the district line agency offices, but also discussed frequently within the LSMC.

*The appointment is for 19 staff. However, we are only 4-5 of us at the moment as six staffs were recently transferred. So, I have to say that we don't have enough manpower at the moment (MOWCSW Bardiya).*

*I am the only one at the moment working in this ward. If the manpower would be increased, it would be easier. I would be able to give more time for DRR related issues (LSMC Ward Secretary).*

*We repeatedly asked the \*\*\*\* Division for more staff but they don't seem to give attention to our demand. They have been giving us false assurance by saying that it is in process. We have at the moment 8 staff. We demanded for 10 more staff but our demand has not been addressed yet. How can I say that they are supporting us? (Anonymous)*

This is a significant constraint for implementing new DRR policies, let alone for the existing role that bureaucrats had to play in DM response. A respondent also felt the added burden of working without elected politicians in place. He saw the absence of elected officials as a resource deficit having to be overcome by the bureaucrats themselves. When asked how local elections will improve the situation in LSMC, he responded:

*The responsibility will be distributed. The things which we are having to do now by ourselves. Now we are having to go to the community and hold ward level meetings, and the manpower is the same. When we had 106 elected body members, we had the same manpower and 106 those who were directly linked with the community. And we are having to do without additional staff (LSMC Public Construction Division Chief)*

#### **7.4.1.3 Lack of DRR Awareness**

Awareness both within the bureaucracy and amongst the political parties was a noted challenge:

*One more thing to consider- before we can teach other people, we ourselves have to be aware about this issue. Therefore, capacity of our staffs has to be built at first (Bardiya MOWCSW).*

*Training and information programs have to be provided... We have to be capable of answering the questions of the public regarding this issue. If the VDC itself doesn't know something clearly, we cannot explain the public about that. So, I think there has to be efforts from the governmental side for these things (Lalitpur VDC)*

*Staff are supportive [of DRR initiatives], but they have very lack of knowledge about the disaster. Before we go to the community, our staff should learn about the disaster. First of all, we should have to give awareness to staff. When the staff doesn't know about the disaster, how will we give guidance to the community people? (LSMC Public Construction Planning).*

One local government respondent discussed the challenge of trying to implement DRR when the local politicians had no awareness of it:

*Yeah in planning process in local government of Nepal political parties play key role in that level. And you know how our politicians are... And they are not more sensitive in the sector of pre-planning phase of disaster. When they are responsive, is when the disaster occurs. Then only are they responsive. That we have to give something, we have to make home for them, we have to provide rice for them. And they never think that how in preliminary phase we have to think. They never think. This, this is the problem for us while working in the local body (Bardiya Municipality).*

#### **7.4.1.4 Physical Infrastructure and Material Resources**

An example of the resource capacity gap is best exemplified in the interview with the LSMC fire brigade. The LSMC fire chief reported 54 fire events had occurred between April 14<sup>th</sup> 2014 and the date of the interview (December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014) indicating that the fire brigade in LSMC is active and an essential resource. Despite this, all of its funding and resources had come from external donors rather than the municipality:

The municipality hasn't provided us with the basic things like jackets, gloves, shoes etc. necessary for fire-fighting activities. The things we have were provided to us by various NGOs, INGOs and the Japanese people.

The municipality hesitates to even provide us fuel for our fire trucks. The fire trucks need fuel for both running and pumping the water (LSMC Fire).

Another specific example of lack of physical infrastructure was discovered in Bardiya district. The interview took place at the VDC Secretaries house as the VDC office had been damaged in the war:

*The VDC building was destroyed during the civil war. Although we demanded for building construction, it has not been in the priorities of the DDC till now. The VDC would have constructed one but it's beyond its capacity as the construction cost is around 5 million rupees (Bardiya VDC).*

## **7.4.2 Political Challenges and Barriers**

### **7.4.2.1 Inequality and marginalisation**

The entrenched inequality in Nepal was identified as a barrier to development. In a village development committee in Kathmandu Valley (only 30-40 minutes from the main cities by rough road) this barrier was discussed by a respondent. The lack of development seen here was explained as the result of a lack of political access because the ethnicity of the population.

*How can I explain this? This place is so close to the capital, just about 12-13 km away but still this place is very much backward in terms of development. The VDC is dominated by Tamang community who don't have much access at the higher level of government. I think that is the reason behind the backwardness. (I: So, this is no representative from this community at the higher level?) Right. This is all due to the lack of political access (Lalitpur VDC).*

### **7.4.2.2 Lack of local elections**

Another political challenge created by the absence of local elections was that the local bodies were vulnerable to indiscriminate programme downloading from the central government:

*And government [central] decides "ok municipality this maternity hospital is now run by you" or "you will run the fire brigade". So this sort of, what do you call it, downloading all responsibilities to the municipalities. Is it the right time? Without the elected members? Without adequate funding? ... all the responsibilities are being transferred to the municipalities. That's a big problem. But it's not the right time to do anything. My personal view, but from the central level they say, "it's the proper time! You see no political leaders, they can't stop us!" (Anonymous).*

### **7.4.2.3 Lack of political party consensus**

Finally, one respondent stated that the lack of political party consensus was impeding development of a comprehensive flood embankment system:

*The people that we elect [referring to central level Members of Parliament], whom we give the development responsibility, should think for the betterment of the local people and the society. I think it's in the hands of the political parties to be able to address the demands of the people and bring the planning's into implementation. The sooner the parties reach a consensus, the faster the problems are solved (Bardiya VDC).*

### **7.4.3 Institutional and Cultural Barriers and Challenges**

Many of the institutional barriers included here are also inherently political in nature. They are discussed here as barriers that challenge the working environment of district and local level bureaucrats.

#### **7.4.3.1 Central government interference**

One thing that stood out in the LSMC interviews was a clear sense of self-determinism and frustration at the current political situation, especially regarding central government interference:

*I've been working in our municipality for a very long time... The central government appoints our senior officer [the Executive Officer]. This is wrong. This is wrong. Because of our Self Government Act, it is wrong. This appointment should be done within the municipality, not from outside (Anonymous).*

#### **7.4.3.2 Frequent transfers of senior government officials- LDO/EO**

The frequent transfers (seemingly on an annual basis) of both the EO and LDO positions was identified as a challenge. As indicated below, the situation of transferring EOs was frustrating for all concerned: the EO, the bureaucrats, and even the ward level disaster management committee volunteers:

*It is very difficult to move frequently. Minimum 2 or 3 years should be provided to work at one place. It would be better. If we do all things good, time should be provided. Sufficient time should be provided. Very difficult to play a role in a short time. We cannot play in expected time (LSMC Executive Officer).*

*It is also the problem that the Chief of the municipality is changing so frequently. By this time, I have experience of four Chiefs in seven years. Can you imagine?! Making relationships is difficult. Making relations with the Chief is very difficult (LSMC Ward Level DMC volunteer).*

Another respondent suggested that the frequent transfers prevented the bureaucracy from strategic or creative planning related to disaster issues.

*I have done the work from more than twelve EOs. Just we work our daily work and I think there is no strategy about how to minimize the risk from disaster and any other aspect also. They are not thinking creatively. I think so (LSMC Anonymous).*

This is an important point. In general, the municipal staff do not transfer. For example, in the LSMC many of the staff interviewed had been working for the municipality for over a decade, whereas, the head of the organisation, are employees of MOFALD and are regularly transferred.

#### **7.4.3.3 The overburdened LDO/Executive Officer positions**

The LDO and Executive Officer positions are pivotal to integrating DRR because of their role in overseeing development initiatives. From an outsider perspective, the job requirements of the LDO and EO seem destined for failure. Firstly, they are tasked with coordinating district development priorities with those of the line agencies (agriculture, education, health, irrigation). However, the mechanisms to facilitate this coordination are weak.

*In this district, until now all the sectoral offices are working on their mandates. For example, you know office of women, children and social welfare, office of agricultural development, etc., are there. But you know in reality, while developing some program and projects, there is no clear integration between all offices including the DDC (Solukhumbu LDO).*

Secondly, in the absence of elected political representatives, the LDOs and EOs serve as both bureaucrat and politician.

*Honestly speaking, I am fulfilling two gaps- the political gap and the bureaucratic gap. I have been playing two roles, one as an LDO and the other as a chairman. Even if I play a political role, I have to say that I am a true bureaucrat. In many issues, I have to work as per the legislations, governmental processes and procedures and the directions of the ministry. This is a local government and this is a government of the local people. The constitution also states that the sovereignty of Nepal is vested in the Nepalese people. The feelings of the Nepalese people are the biggest things for me. While working here in Bardiya, I have always kept the people of Bardiya at the top and have always tried to work to address their issues and demands. While doing that I am also fulfilling the governmental processes and procedures (Bardiya LDO).*

*Since 12.5 years there are no political representative in the local bodies. It is done by bureaucrats. It is very difficult we have to be a trio responsibility: the responsibility of political, responsibility of political representative and the responsibility of a civil servant. So, it is very difficult to work with the people, with the society and within the organization as well (LSMC Executive Officer).*

All told, LDOs must respond to public demands, the demands of the political parties and the demands of MOFALD. DRR is one of many development concerns that the GON and districts are trying to address. The district development offices are beyond their capacity to coordinate and implement so many development agendas.

#### **7.4.3.4 Public demands do not include DRR**

The 14-step planning process (discussed in Chapter 4) created some challenges for local government staff who were beholden to the development requests of the community. For example, a senior staff member of Gulyeria

municipality in Bardiya District indicated that the institutional framework of the planning process and the public lack of awareness created a challenge for the local government to incorporate DRR into its development projects.

*...at the community level, you know, the municipal planning process is bottom up planning process. All the planning comes through the ward levels.... When the people select one project from the ward level they are not sensitive to disaster risk reduction. And when all the projects are selected through the ward level, we cannot be flexible with such types of projects. We are compelled to select this project, selected by our people through ward level and these projects are not disaster responsive (Gulyeria Human Resource Chief).*

#### **7.4.3.5 Putting infrastructure development first**

Another institutional challenge identified by a respondent was how infrastructure development was privileged over social development initiatives:

*...no one is serious to the development. But they think that it is only the infrastructure. Making infrastructure is enough. That is not only development. There are many more dimension of the development. We have to go in the prospective of the women, vulnerable people, vulnerable people but no one cares about it. If we are doing like that, where will the development, where will it be orientated? Where will it be directed? That is the major challenge in the development sectors. So there is core challenge I say is one is the proper implementation of the policies and the aspect of the development means, you know, no one is conscious of proper development of the district (Bardiya District Governance Expert).*

*All the district have similar problem and demand. The main demand is infrastructure. They ask for roads, sanitation, drinking water system, bridge, like this (Solukhumbu LDO).*

#### **7.4.3.6 Corruption and bureaucratic risk aversion**

This research found a secondary consequence of corruption and political party interference. These conditions were contributing to a paralysis within the bureaucracy. Two respondents discussed the inertia within the bureaucracy in ways that suggested a highly risk adverse bureaucratic culture.

*Many officials are there and they are not motivated. They just see if I just start some new programs I will be blamed and many communities will ask many questions or political body will ask me why this? Like this. So they are scared, maybe yeah? (Anonymous)*

Similarly, the second respondent indicated that it was easier for a bureaucrat to do nothing than to risk being censured.

*But people here in Nepal they don't talk about accountability. Because in the government system, while they say there is accountability—that it has to be transparent and accountable—but if you are not working you are not accountable for anything. But if you work and if you make small mistake*



*then you might be in problem. So that is why people just try to avoid the difficult decisions and taking responsibility. Because making decision is taking the responsibility... But if you work there are more chances of you being in problem. Problem means from the supervising agency and the vigilance agency<sup>32</sup> But if you don't work you keep getting the salary. You have to work through your own motivation (Anonymous).*

The policy environment tends to already be conservative and risk averse by nature (as discussed in the policy change literature in Chapter 3). The above quotes indicate that on top of this, Nepali bureaucrats are fearful of repercussions from upsetting the status quo. As discussed in Chapter 4, the ending of corrupt practices within the Nepal Electricity Authority had unleashed what was described as a 'hornet nest' (Shrestha 2016) as those who had benefitted from corruption pushed for the removal of the new head of the NEA, Kulman Ghising. In this environment, it is easy to see how innovation and policy paradigm change is crushed. It also shows that corruption is a formidable barrier to be addressed if the bureaucracy is to be amendable to implementing new policy agendas.

## **7.5 Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City Under the Microscope**

This chapter now shifts its focus and tenor, to examine LSMC as a case study. In doing so, it answers the final sub-question posed in the introduction: What is different about LSMC and why was it more conducive for DRR policy integration? That LSMC was an exception is demonstrated in the following quotes:

*Lalitpur Sub Metropolitan City is the example to make the planning and program about the risk management. This is the example municipality in the country (LSMC Executive Officer).*

*The main role is I just... I was a local. I lived there, I was born in Lalitpur, and that's my home. That feeling, yeah? That feeling drive you to work there. So I can just work there in building code and just check drawing designs and regular work I can do and I get salary. But let's save our community, yeah? That feeling is necessary. And also I motivated staff and colleagues as well. We give salary but its maybe not enough. But let's work for our city it will be related to our career also. So that is a motivating*

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<sup>32</sup> During the time of fieldwork, Lok Man Karki (Chief of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA)) was under scrutiny for abusing the powers of the CIAA. His political appointment as Commissioner was called into question in the media and by the Court. On January 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 a Nepal Supreme Court ruling removed Karki as head of the CIAA.

*factor (MOFALD Local Infrastructure and Building Code Specialist- former LSMC employee).*

In order to complete this case study, twenty-three interviews were conducted over a three-week period with the Executive Officer, division chiefs and subordinates, and ward secretaries/ward level disaster management committees. Notably, two of the nine division chiefs were women (Finance Division Chief and Heritage, Culture and Archaeological Conservation). Across divisions in the LSMC there was an appreciable understanding of the necessity to mainstream DRR. More than this, the staff at LSMC were keen to share and discuss various innovative initiatives the LSMC had produced. These included:

- Being the first municipality to adopt the national building code;
- Hiring full time disaster management staff;
- Heritage conservation that reinforced traditional Newari earthquake resilient buildings;
- Campaigning and achieving child labour free zones;
- Hiring the first environmental engineer graduate.

These innovations were suggestive of a competency and pride in the bureaucracy that was absent in other research locations. As one division chief claimed:

*I believe that I am an employee and I should do something for the country. The employee should not have the feeling that they are here only for salary. Due to such employees, Nepal's bureaucracy is condemned and criticized. Bureaucracy itself is not a bad thing; it has also good part. Someone may be bad but not everyone in bureaucracy is bad. Even the fingers of one hand are not equal (Social Welfare Division Chief).*

This is not to say that LSMC was the model of efficiency. As one respondent honestly opined:

*I think maybe you know that most of the government staff have lot of time, because with the government staff I think if they do work I think it's for 2 hours. We do have to work 7 hours in a day, but I think we are not working 7 hours. We have plenty of time for doing the extra activities. Like the disaster risk reduction- we can talk about and we can do the orientation. But it's not happening (Anonymous).*

### **7.5.1 Brief LSMC Background and Context**

LSMC is an ancient city located in Kathmandu Valley. Originally, it was a planned city constructed to replicate the Buddhist Wheel of Righteousness, with

four stupas<sup>33</sup> (that still exist) marking its cardinal points (LSMC Online). What was once planned and ordered is now unregulated, aging, and unable to provide basic services like potable water. The entire Kathmandu Valley has seen a migration influx as rural people pushed into the valley in search of jobs, better education and security from insurgent forces during the Maoist revolt. The municipalities have been overwhelmed and unable to keep pace. Many civic services—such as municipal water—are provided by boards, overseen by the central government. Presently, LSMC is the third largest local government in Nepal (following Kathmandu Metropolitan City and Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City respectively), with a population of 226,728 with 54,748 individual households (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011d).

### **7.5.2 Building Code *Pioneers*: “Right people, Right Time”**

*What I feel is, in DRR this aspect from among all the municipalities in Nepal, we call ourselves pioneers. Because we are the first municipality to implement the national building code and to establish this disaster management related and earthquake safety section. We are the ones who went to the community and awareness programs (LSMC Public Construction Division Chief).*

One of the main reasons why LSMC is different from the other research sites, is that it was the first municipality to adopt the seismic building code, even before it became national legislation.

*There is building code which was in fact formulated by us. The building code that was formulated in Lalitpur was then taken by the government and then the government formulated the National Building Code (LSMC Social Welfare Chief).*

Although the above respondents claimed LSMC staff formulated the building code, the code was drafted between 1992-1994 by a team led by New Zealand earthquake civil engineers and several Nepali engineers (who were not LSMC staff but would go to become prominent advocates of earthquake safety<sup>34</sup>). The project was funded by UNDP and overseen by the central government Department of Urban Development and Building Construction (DUDBC).

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<sup>33</sup> A stupa marks an important Buddhist religious site. Typically shaped like a mound or a dome they are often filled with relics (often the remains of monks and nuns).

<sup>34</sup> The two Nepali personnel on the project were Amod Dixit founding member and Executive Director of NSET and Yogeshwar Parajuli, another founding member of NSET and former head of the Kathmandu Development Authority.

LSMC's role in its development was to work out the 'kinks.' As one LSMC respondent describes:

*Then we established one technical cell involving other professionals outside, and then when the building permit and designer is there, we started a consultation with a designer. All the time we are asking: How are you? What are the problems you are facing? Even the house owners we invited for input...*

LSMC's role helped to give the policy national traction and helped to clarify implementation challenges. The code passed into national legislation in 2003. However, its early adoption by LSMC was the result of enthusiastic staff, a supportive executive, and elected political system.

*Right people and right time, right support and right time. Many local people who are working there also live there [meaning Lalitpur Sub-Metropolitan City]. And many technical persons working there at the time were young and energetic. And we also got support from Executive Officer. That is also very important. There was a mayor and an elected body. Actually, the time the building code was announced and the decision was made, we had an elected body—the mayor (who is now 77 years), the deputy mayor and the ward chairmen. They were also motivated and convinced through NSET. They were convinced and then they direct us, "ok go ahead" (MOFALD Local Infrastructure and Building Code Specialist- former LSMC employee).*

Because municipal staff are not transferred like their central level counterparts, many employees who had been active in pushing for the building code adoption were now in senior division chief roles. The majority of respondents interviewed had worked in the municipality for at least ten years. The current Social Welfare Division Chief (who had a financial rather than an engineering background) had attended disaster management training in 1997 in Bangkok that had evidently made a lasting impression on his work. He also pushed for LSMCs implementation of the building code.

*It was a time when they were not aware about it. Because they had no idea about it at that time, I was the only one who had attended the training. So, I was working to prepare different materials with what I learned in the training. Then I came to the issue of Building Code. People don't know that the buildings have to be constructed using earthquake techniques. Even the ones with engineering background didn't know that. I continuously told them about the Building Code and that we should strictly implement it. It became really hard to make everyone understand it. I took the training in 1997 and only in 2003, the building code was eventually legislated (LSMC Social Welfare Division Chief).*

At the time that LSMC adopted the building code in 2000, there were still elected local officials in place. In retrospect, one respondent speculated that without the local elected body, the code could not have been adopted by the LSMC:

*Last time there was an elected body in this municipality and we announce a building code, the elected body helps directly. Oh it is necessary. It is most important they realize. If in this time, no elected body, our bureaucracy is running this municipality, building code is not possible. Because bureaucracy can't take more responsibility (LSMC Disaster Management Section).*

Adoption of the building code in 2000 was clearly a defining moment for those who were a part of the process. There was evident pride in LSMCs role in fostering the building code. A young and motivated staff pushed the executive and elected officials to adopt an innovative policy. Sadly, sixteen years later that dynamic is no longer possible in the LSMC. Without elected bodies, the central government controls local government agendas. Staff have little ability to shape and influence those agendas. The building code innovations in LSMC appeared just before the abolishment of local governments. Perhaps that is partly why LSMC staff were so affected by it and its memory lingered. It represented a time when they had some autonomy over local government direction. Its legacy was clearly sustaining an on-going motivation to institutionalize DRM in spite of the present day institutional and political constraints.

### **7.5.3 Current Institutional DRR and DM Initiatives**

LSMC had instituted building code implementation through its Urban Development Division. There were two sections established, one was the earthquake safety section (building code section) and the other was the disaster management section:

*We have separated disaster management into two sections: one is pre-disaster and the other is post disaster. So pre-disasters its preparation of strengthening building structures by implementing the building codes. And in post disasters we are managing how we will be capable enough to manage post-disaster scenario. For example, rescue management some storing of rescue related equipment and plans, some awareness programs, some establishment of different aware committees in DM committees in different levels of wards and centre of city. So talking of DM we have to separate in two phases, pre and post (LSMC Urban Development Division Chief).*

Building codes were “interlinked” with the building permit process. There was one staff member in the building code section and three in the building permit section who would review building permits for their compliance with the National Building Code. The previous year 2013, LSMC had received 800 building permit applications.

*All the buildings are checked by the Building Code Section if they are following the code. No Objection Certificate is issued to the owner if everything is as per the code. Else, I won't provide the certificate. That is what my responsibility is all about (Building Code Section).*

Those in the permit section would do site visits to ensure compliance. The process was explained this way:

*There is a 3-step implementation. First step is land verification. One out of the three people [permit] goes for that land inspection. A 15-days notice is issued to the neighbouring land or buildings for any complaints. If there is no objection from anyone during this time, we provide a certificate that will allow them to construct up to the typing [drafting] level. The second step inspection is after the completion of typing level. If everything is ok and as per the code, a No Objection Certificate is provided for further construction. In the third step, the building is inspected and the Completion Certificate is provided. So, inspection is done three times for every building from starting till the end (Building Code Section).*

Even here, the absence of an elected mayor impeded LSMC's ability to fully enforce building codes. If a building was constructed without following the proper building code, the LSMC had no legal authority to order the building to be demolished. Only a mayor (elected by the people) could sign an order to demolish a building that did not comply with the code. LSMCs hands were tied when it came to strict enforcement of the building code.

Also, building code compliance seemed over estimated by LSMC staff. The Division Chief and section heads maintained that the building codes were fully implemented in LSMC, the reality of this seemed implausible. Looking at the number of annual permit applications (800), the number of reviews each permit required (3), and the level of staffing (3+1), 100% compliance was doubtful. Also, corruption is so systemic in Nepal, that it cannot be discounted in the LSMC. Nonetheless, the process of reviewing building permit applications for LSMC had become institutionalised and was viewed by staff as a component of LSMCs overall disaster risk management strategy. Attention now turns to the other DM and DRR work implemented by LSMC.

### **7.5.3.1 Disaster Management and DMCs**

LSMC had established a full-time disaster management section with two staff. The head of the section was an engineer who had been working on disaster related issues since 2002.

*Nowadays I'm working totally in this field. In office time. On one day, maybe two or three programs are organized in our community I am going there. Some presentations, some lectures, are participation in this program related to mitigation, awareness program, exercises, simulations... drama competition at the community level (LSMC Disaster Management).*

Although there were two staff specifically assigned to the DM section, encouragingly the DM understood other LSMC staff components as related to DRM:

*The DM section directly working is two persons. Two persons only. But it is so that if other sections work like fire brigade, other health sections, all the sections are about 50 people, But directly involved only 2 persons in our section (LSMC Disaster Management).*

These 'auxiliary' DM staff were not well integrated or part of an overall strategy for DRM in LSMC. The DM reported that Oxfam support was soon to be available for the drafting of a LSMC DRM plan. It was a promising step towards integration that the DM section head recognized DM as encompassing more than just the DM section. What is notable about LSMC, is that the DM section head lacked the proprietary DM control that was exhibited at the central level by MOHA.

LSMCs disaster management section had a dedicated budget of RS 2.85 million (approximately 27,000 USD). At present it was the only division to get a specific budget for DRR:

*The divisions don't get separate budget for it. We have 22 wards and our main program is to aware the wards. We aware the students of various school in those wards. It's not possible to sanction huge budget for DRR because we don't have a source (LSMC Finance Section Chief).*

Until now, the annual budget had been spent mostly on training:

*Even though there is support from the supportive organization, we have been going to the community with our own programs. We also conduct programs. A lot of training programs are being conducted. There are other extra activities, Earthquake Safety Day and we also have been organizing School Safety Programs from school to school. The Mason training is also conducted by the municipality (LSMC Disaster Management).*

The DM section head's time was mainly spent on capacity building through its support of ward level disaster management committees (DMCs). Lalitpur had 22 wards, and at present 19 had formulated a committee made up of local volunteers, and drafted a ward level DM plan which was submitted to the LSMC. The DM section head was in charge of linking the DMCs with municipal processes. A ward DMC secretary, who in general was critical of government DRM processes, was glowing in her assessment of the DM staff member support:

*And whenever we want him in the ward he manages to come. And he is a helping person. He is a very good person. He tries to facilitate us in administration or in the program or in managing the teams, he is a good helper (Ward Level DMC).*

The genesis of these DMCs had come through a variety of external NGO interventions. As such there was little in the way of standardization, for instance some were using MOFALDs Local Disaster Risk Management Reduction Plan (LDRMP), while others were not. At the time of fieldwork, the DMCs received zero funding from the LSMC. However, that was about to change. LSMC had proposed a budget increase to RS 6 million (approximately USD 56 000). At the time of fieldwork this increase had not been formally approved, but the DM section head was confident it would be. LSMC was increasing its DM budget in order to start funding the DMCs and now required the DMCs to submit a standardized DRM plan to the municipality every two years. It was confirmed by the LSMC during the post-earthquake fieldwork that municipal funding was going to the DMCs.

Both the Urban Development Division Chief and the Disaster Management Section Head indicated that it is LSMC's role to coordinate DRM activities within its jurisdiction, with support from external agencies.

*Coordination and monitoring part is municipality's responsibility and other activities funding programme running this is the other organizations- Oxfam, NSET, and Nepal Red Cross (LSMC Disaster Management).*

When asked how his colleagues in LSMC respond when they are approached about DRR, the disaster management section head noted an increase in awareness and receptiveness. However, implementation throughout the municipal sectors was still lacking:



*Response is very better in other divisions. Response is very better. But working condition and helping condition is not satisfactory. Response is very better. They talk about our policy and our programmes and they tell me that this is necessary. However, in working conditions and implementation throughout sectors there is still some negligence (Disaster Management).*

It is clear that the building code adoption was a catalyst that sparked evolving institutional support. Since 2000, LSMC has institutionalised BCI as part of the building permit process, and established a separate section for disaster preparedness. According to staff, overall awareness amongst the staff was increased because of this effort. LSMC had advanced beyond building codes and established a separate section for disaster management. This section was organizing community disaster management preparedness at the ward levels and was beginning to financially support the DMCs. These advances are strong indicators of institutional support for disaster risk reduction.

#### **7.5.4 DRM Initiatives in other Divisions**

Within the LSMC, there were two ‘pockets’ of work being done by other divisions that related to DRM. Unfortunately, the fire brigade could not be included in this discussion, as it was very underfunded and neglected by the LSMC (see section 7.4.1.4).

##### **7.5.4.1 Heritage, Culture and Archaeological Conservation**

The importance of Lalitpur’s historical monuments was evident in the Executive Officer’s list of development priorities and also by the budget allocated for heritage conservation:

*This is the city of world heritage, you know the Patan Durbar Square is listed as world heritage site by UNESCO. So, the primary duty of this municipality is to preserve the archaeological monuments and cultural things. And the drinking water, and the street light (LSMC Executive Officer).*

*Lalitpur is a historical city. So, the maximum budget is sanctioned for preservation of historical monuments (LSMC Finance Division Chief).*

In order to raise its profile in LSMC a separate division was created and headed by a senior architect. The work of the division was not DRR *per se*, in that it was

not label or part of a comprehensive DRR strategy. But in the conservation of the historical buildings, DRR was being enhanced. As explained by the division chief:

*The traditional type of construction is one of the earthquake risk reduction techniques. There are some wedges in our traditional houses. Have you already been to any Newari-type traditional houses? (I: Yes.) I think it is far better than the RCC buildings. (I: Modern buildings?) Yes, the system of rafters and every joist are well planned. There are wedges to tie up the links. They are flexible and can move during the time of earthquakes. So, there will be very less possibility to collapse due to disasters. And main thing is, there are number of joists and even if a point collapses, the other points remain in position. That's why the whole building will not collapse totally. So, the people living in such kind of houses are safer (LSMC Heritage Conservation Division Chief).*

In the 1934 earthquake, and again in the 2015 earthquakes, many of the traditional structures in Kathmandu Valley collapsed. The lessons from the 1934 earthquake was that historical structures that are not conserved lose their earthquake resiliency due to rot that weakens the framework. LSMC division chief was aware of this. Their efforts at conservation were recognized as an important component of DRR.

*What I think we learned from the earthquake of 1934 is that the structures should be maintained from time to time. If there was regular maintenance, the buildings would not have collapsed completely. Another thing is the absence of Damp Proof Course (DPC) in the old structures. If the DPC was properly constructed and the buildings were maintained at regular intervals, I think the earthquake would not have done that huge destruction. There was erosion of bricks due to salt and acid. The thing about wooden structure is that if there are holes in it, it becomes the home for rats and termites. If the wooden parts were treated in time, it would have been protected from insects and pests. The wooden structure remained untreated. The rats made the walls weaker by making several holes in it. Because of such things, the chances of collapsing increased during earthquakes. The techniques were really good but the problem was the lack of timely maintenance and repair. Now, in order to be protected from disasters, we follow up with the people and advise them to pay attention to maintenance, repair and treat the wood. If we do that, we can keep the structures safe and protected (LSMC Heritage Conservation Division Chief).*

Fire is another hazard for old temples and wooden structures. Although LSMC has a fire brigade, it is not mentioned in the respondent's discussion of fire risk:

*Fire is also a disaster and it can cause destruction. For an example in the Durbar Square area there is Taleju temple where the Pujari (priest) also stays. They have kept the wire exposed. In case the wire is short, the entire structure can catch fire and it can get destroyed immediately. So, fire extinguishers and fire hydrants should be kept. (I: Are they kept?) After*

*the proposal from a JICA volunteer, at present we have one fire hydrant in Durbar Square area, another in Sundhara and there is one in Nagbahal. In the Durbar Square area there is a system designed to use the water from the ponds in case of fire. The small fire extinguishers are not effective when it comes about the fire in wooden structures as the wooden structures catch fire very fast. However, there are several fire extinguishers around the museum.*

Through the conservation and preservation of the historic buildings, using the appropriate historical techniques, the division was in fact achieving DRR. But its disconnect from a larger LSMC DRM vision was a limiting factor. In the past, the respondent reported some connection to the Disaster Management Division in LSMC through external trainings:

*There used to be several trainings related to DRM in the past conducted by organizations like UNDP and NSET. They [LSMC DM Section] used to involve us in such trainings as well. At the moment, we don't have so much of involvement (LSMC Heritage Conservation Division Chief).*

She also did not see her division as part of LSMC's DRR strategy:

*When we hear about disaster management, we have the feeling that it's the responsibility of his [Disaster management] section (LSMC Heritage Conservation Division Chief).*

#### **7.5.4.2 Social Welfare Division**

The division chief for Social Welfare was discussed above (section 6.5.2) as an early champion of building code implementation. As head of the Community Health section, he was currently promoting DM cross-training for existing LSMC health volunteers and within the children and women's groups. He reported that although his work was in coordination with the Disaster Management Section in LSMC, the DM training was instituted through his own initiatives:

*568 volunteers look after health-related issues, like what to do after disasters. Similarly, around 14000 women from 158 women groups help in creating awareness regarding this issue... (LSMC Social Welfare Division Chief)*

*From the Health Section too we teach in a daily basis how to prepare for disaster management and we also have been doing that. After that, there is Community Development Section from where we provide training even to the children. The Disaster Management Section does not give trainings rather we provide trainings ourselves. We have 65 child clubs. We have been teaching the children in the clubs regarding disaster management. As I told earlier, we provide information related to disaster management to the women of 158 women clubs during trainings and orientation (LSMC Social Welfare Division Chief).*

His efforts to integrate DM training into existing health programmes is a clear example of how social learning within the Nepal bureaucracy may lead to DRR policy adoption.

### **7.5.5 Discussion**

This case study of LSMC set out to answer what is different in LSMC that made it receptive to DRR policy integration. There were several tangible differences that were found in LSMC and not in other locations. Unlike in the district or central government offices, the staff at LSMC were permanent and did not transfer. The division chiefs appeared to be formidable group of employees for a temporary EO to deal with. Most of the respondents spoken to had worked for the municipality for at least a decade. Many of the division chiefs had started out in the municipality in junior positions. They had a long institutional knowledge of the city and its history. There also was a self-determination and discontent with central level interference. Finally, the staff of LSMC closely identified as residents of LSMC. This seemed to invoke a pride in the municipality that was not found in other research sites.

It is also clear that LSMC benefits from being located in Kathmandu Valley, where many INGOs and NGOs are based. LSMC has strong connections with the Nepal Red Cross, NSET, Oxfam, and others. However, if it were not for LSMCs receptiveness to DRM institutionalisation it is unlikely these connections would exist. What is clear, is that DRR integration within the LSMC had not occurred because of central government involvement or international global frameworks. LSMC was not active in the NRRC flagships, nor were staff motivated by the HFA (the adoption of the building code occurred 5 years prior to Nepal's signing of the HFA). The early adoption of the building code came mainly through enthusiastic engineers about the prospect of safer building construction and innovation. This is an important finding and highlights the neglected role that professional affiliation (perhaps through associations and organisations) can play in integrating DRR into work processes.

LSMCs early adoption of the building code paints a picture of a time when younger staff were able to influence senior executives and political members to adopt new policy measures. In present day, the memory of this effort seemed to have left an indelible mark in LSMC, with the legacy being a cross-sector awareness of the importance of DRM initiatives. LSMC also stands out from the

other field sites because of its institutionalization of DM that included: 2 full time staff members, sectors incorporating DRM, and a new initiative to support and fund ward level DMCs.

## **7.6 Chapter Summary**

The main objective of this chapter was to explore the opportunities and challenges for mainstreaming DRR at the district and local levels. This approach was taken because there were very few indicators that top-down MOHA-led mainstreaming of DRR was having any impact at the district/local level. As discussed in the previous chapter, mainstreaming DRR is not a substantive policy position of MOHA. This chapter also sought to find out whether mainstreaming DRR was occurring amongst the ministries that were leading the NRRC Flagships. Only the efforts of MOFALD (lead of Flagship 4) appeared to have an appreciable impact at the district and local levels. This was because MOFALD had taken the approach of changing senior bureaucratic behaviours in regard to DRR by making it a part of their performance contracts. MOFALD also had taken care to integrate various policy instruments so that they were harmonized. For example, the Environmentally Friendly Governance Framework was written to integrate the content from the Local Disaster Risk Management Plan and the Minimum Conditions and Performance Management Guidelines. The LDOs and Executive Officers were aware of their DRM commitments at the district and local levels, but were constrained in implementing them because of the district and local level realities.

It is those realities—particularly the challenges—that further add to the argument that mainstreaming DRR in Nepal is mere rhetoric. Nepali bureaucrats are well aware of the challenges they face as public administrators. Any central level policy prescription that suggests applying a cross-sector approach to a wicked policy problem without serious commitments to reform and investment in the public sector is unlikely to succeed. Those at the district and local levels disclosed the numerous barriers they face in implementing DRR policy throughout development sectors.

However, this chapter also found a source of optimism in the approach that the LSMC had taken to mainstream DRR into municipal operations. The LSMC case study demonstrated that current progress in DRR integration was stimulated

through staff learning and previous policy change success. Understandably, the bureaucrats were motivated because of their role as 'pioneers' in implementing the building code. This chapter did not assess the efficacy of LSMC's building code programme. Instead it focused more on how that early success facilitated institutional adoption of DRM more than ten years after it pioneered building code adoption. Contrary to the negative associations of the Nepal bureaucracy, the LSMC case study demonstrates the important role that bureaucrats can play (albeit with local elections) in instigating policy change. It is also a reminder that local governments may be an important component within the Advocacy Coalition Framework and in driving third order policy change. This is a significant conclusion because it is an idea that is not in keeping with Nepal's long history of centralised rule.

One final comment about this chapter is about the role that political parties play in Nepal's public administration. LSMC staff were certain that a key reason the municipality was able to pioneer building code adoption was because there were elected municipal officials in place at the time. Currently, the lack of elections has the political parties exerting undue influence on LDOs and Executive Officers and dictating development objectives with no public accountability. In both instances, it is clear that political parties are key to the process of policy paradigm change. Because of this, the next chapter focuses on how political parties understand DRR and the role they may play in brokering DRR policy change.

## 8 The Policy Brokers: How Political Parties Understand DRR and What it Means for Policy Paradigm Change

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Before fieldwork began, the intention was to only research how mainstreaming DRR was occurring across the central government level (Chapter 6) and down through the district and local levels (Chapter 7). Upon entering the field, it became apparent that one could not examine mainstreaming DRR throughout the bureaucracy without also examining the role that the political parties played in enabling or hindering its adoption. Because of the highly politicised nature of the bureaucracy (Chapter 4), political parties are key actors in Nepal for understanding how Hall's third order policy paradigm change (and ultimately that of mainstreaming DRR) is to be achieved. To that end, this chapter diverges away from any discussion of mainstreaming DRR throughout the government (Chapters 6 and 7), to examine the role of political parties as potential mainstreaming DRR policy brokers (see ACF Chapter 3).

### 8.1 Introduction

In Nepal, a few political parties wield excessive influence to set government development agendas and priorities. In democratic states, there are checks and balances built into the governance system<sup>35</sup> to ensure that power is not concentrated with any one political institution; usually these are achieved through legislation, regulations and by insuring independence of government branches (e.g. executive, legislative, and judiciary). In Nepal, political parties are regulated by the *Political Parties Act* (GON 2002), which stipulates transparent party financial reporting, prohibits party memberships for Government of Nepal

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<sup>35</sup> Montesquieu (1748/1949:109) argued that separation of state powers was essential to minimize corruption in a democracy, "The principle of democracy is corrupted not only when the spirit of equality is extinct, but likewise when they fall into a spirit of extreme equality... Then the people, incapable of bearing the very power they have delegated, want to manage everything themselves, to debate for the senate, to execute for the magistrate, and to decide for the judges."

employees, and prohibits any “act which may be contrary to public morality” (5.d). Nonetheless, instabilities (political, economic) and institutions with weak oversight have allowed political parties to exert undue influence on the executive branch administrative tool, the bureaucracy. In a Kathmandu Post article, Chief Election Commissioner Bhojraj Pokharel summarised how this came to be:

“After 1990, with the end of absolute monarchy and declaration of constitutional democracy, there was a crisis of confidence between the political parties and the bureaucracy. As the bureaucracy was part of the old establishment, the political parties could not fully trust the old guards. And this led to some major reshuffling in the bureaucracy. The political parties promoted bureaucrats of their choice and side-lined the old, mature and experienced bureaucrats. This created a psychology of fear among the bureaucrats and they became submissive. They sought political protection to keep their jobs and get lucrative postings and promotions... The bureaucracy was not strong enough and became submissive to the political parties for its own vested interests, whereas the political parties started to control the bureaucracy for their personal gains” (Pokharel 2016, Online).

The overarching question driving this chapter is to understand the extent to which political parties are acting as policy brokers for DRR. In doing so, it answers the following research questions:

1. To what extent is DRR being promoted within and throughout the political parties? What is political party rhetoric and what is reality?
2. What barriers and opportunities exist for political parties to push for DRR integration both internally throughout the party and externally throughout government development initiatives?
3. How and why are political parties influencing DRR advancement in the two districts studied?

This chapter presents the data from nine in-depth interviews held with central and district level MPs, political party spokesmen, and district chairmen from the central government, Bardiya, and Solukhumbu districts. In a few instances, other government bureaucratic interviews are introduced to contextualise what is being argued. This research focuses on what are colloquially referred to in Nepal as the *Big Three*: Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party Nepal- United Marxist Leninists (CPN-UML), and the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre). Each party has large nation-wide membership and are organised throughout Nepal to the local level. They have, in various coalition arrangements, formed the national government since the end of the Maoist insurgency (2006) and the establishment of the Constituent Assembly (CA) in 2008.



## **8.2 Overview of Political Parties in Nepal**

This chapter begins with a context setting overview of each party. It then outlines the general party structure and administration and ends with a discussion of the pervasive corruption that exists within the political parties.

### **8.2.1 Nepali Congress (NC)**

The Nepali Congress (NC) is one of the oldest political parties in Nepal. It was founded in 1950 when the Nepali National Congress (founded 1948) and Nepal Democratic Congress (founded 1947) merged. In alliance with other political factions and the monarchy, the NC led the first people's revolution that overthrew the ruling Rana dynasty in 1951 (Dhungel 2005). It originated as a social democratic party but has shifted to a more centralist position with the arrival of far-left parties like the Maoists. According to the Nepali Congress Party website, "The total Active Members of Nepali Congress are 101,000. The total Ordinary Members are recorded to be 500,000. However, it is estimated that the actual membership may run up to 1.2 million" (Nepali Congress 2015: Online).

### **8.2.2 Communist Party of Nepal- United Marxist Leninists (CPN-UML)**

The Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) is the largest communist party in Nepal. It was formed in 1991 with the merger of the CPN (Marxist) and the CPN (Marxist-Leninist) parties. The merger was a result of the first *Jana Andolan* (People's Movement) of 1990 which ended the Partyless Panchayat System in Nepal. Although communist in name the party is more social democratic in orientation, having adopted in 1993 the principal of a "People's Multi-party Democracy" (*Janata ko Bahudaliya Janabad*) (Nepali Times Online). There are two types of memberships in the CPN-UML: general and organised. Organised members are required to carry out more work on behalf of the party. According to the party website there are 73,220 organised members and 400,000 general members in Nepal (CPN-UML Online).

### **8.2.3 Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre)**

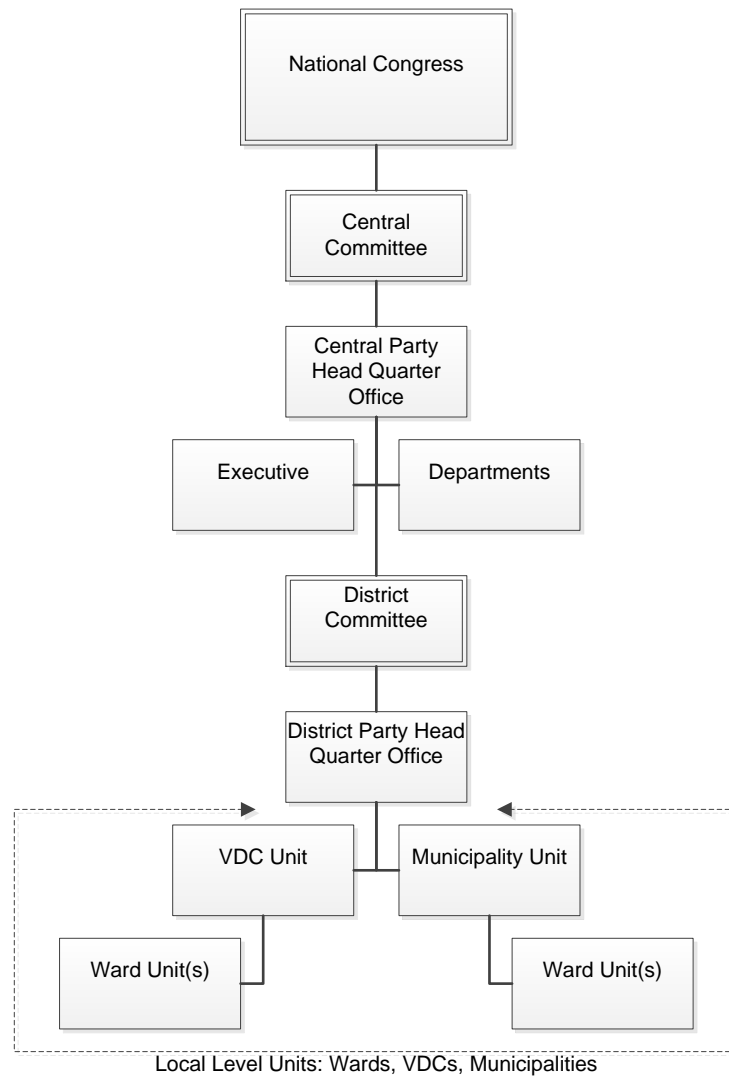
In the mid-1990s, the Maoist fundamentally disagreed that a constitutional monarchy could fix the social, economic and political problems of Nepal. They

began a decade long armed insurgency in 1996 to overthrow the monarchy and push for fundamental change. They began to see that their military struggle would not win the political struggle they were aiming to achieve (Al Jazeera 2016). The Maoist reached a peace settlement in 2006, decommissioned their weapon cache, and became a mainstream political party. In 2008, they won the most seats to form the first secular republic government in Nepal. The gulf between Maoist ideology and the concessions necessary to perform in a multi-party democracy continues to internally divide the party. Out of the three parties involved in this field work they are furthest left on the political spectrum.

#### **8.2.4 General Structure and Administration of the Big Three Political Parties**

This section discusses the general organisational structure of the political parties. Each party has a central headquarter office in Kathmandu. Executive party staff and members are supported by various departments which work to draft background papers, review policy, gather public opinions, and distribute newsletters and communication materials through the party (Dhungel 2005). Every five years or so, a National Convention/Congress is held. This is the highest decision-making body in the party organisation. Party member delegates are selected from all over the country to discuss and vote on the key policy issues and vote for the Party President/Secretary General. Situated below the National Convention/ Congress is a Central Working Committee (CWC), which oversees political operations and policy implementation as set by the National Convention/Congress. The diagram below gives a general overview of how the parties are structured. There are slight variations and different names used between the parties, but the basic organisational structures are similar.

*Figure 8-1. General Political Party Organisational Structure*



(Source: the Author)

Based on the above, party decisions are made through democratic processes. However, Dhungel (2005) finds that “...personality and factionalism are the main reasons for the lack of internal democracy within the Nepali Congress” (Dhungel 2005). Although Dhungel only mentioned the NC, this is a feature found throughout each of the parties, as evidenced by internal party factionalism and splinter groups that continually break away from the main political bodies to form new parties in Nepal.

Each of the three political parties have district headquarter offices that administer the party at the district and local levels (including memberships, party meetings, conferences, and communications). The head of the party at the district level is the district chairman who is responsible for overseeing party

operations. The chairman is elected by the party. For each party at the district level, there is a district committee that is made up of members from the municipal and VDC units or cells.

The primary policy document generated by political parties at the central level is their election manifesto (Dhungel 2005). The election manifesto or platform is a document that expresses each party's values, goals, and plans, which is used as an election tool to garner votes and outline their priorities if elected to government. Each of the three parties 2013 election manifesto was reviewed for DRR content and summarised below.

### **8.2.5 Political Party Reputation in Nepal- 'Stealing for the Team' and the 'Demands of the People'**

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, local level elections have not been held since 1997 meaning elected political members at the district and local levels have not been in place since their terms expired in 2002. From 2008-2012, the political parties participated in local decision making through the "all party mechanism", a round table of sorts aimed at consensus building where local political representatives could participate. However, as a Carter Centre report describes, the all-party mechanism stimulated rampant corruption and bullying behaviour.

"Other interlocutors refer to the process of "finding consensus" as parties "dividing up the budget." As one human rights advocate put it, "if one party resists, they get the medicine [pay-off] to keep their silence." In some cases, party affiliated groups receive payments or other direct benefits from the budget. For example, a recent budget dispute in a VDC in Darchula was resolved when a smaller party received permission to distribute jobs to several of its supporters" (Carter Centre 2011: 4).

The behaviour of the unelected political parties from the "all party mechanisms" led to MOFALD disbanding it in 2012, although it still exists informally. This entrenched political party behaviour is highly problematic for Nepal governance as it demonstrates that corruption is institutionalised and widely pervasive throughout Nepal. Mistree, writing generally about corruption in political parties, suggests that "parties are central actors as they facilitate the connections and protections necessary for corruption to take place" and that political party "corruption is frequently about 'stealing for the team', not necessary stealing for oneself" (Mistree 2015: 370).

Since the abolishment of the “all party mechanism” the central government, notably the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, has attempted to minimise the role of unelected political parties through greater emphasis on a 14 Step Annual Planning process and Ward Citizen Forums to encourage direct citizen participation. However, at the time of this fieldwork, political party behaviour continued to be a problem. As reported by a municipal Executive Officer:

*There is undue influence of political parties while performing our duty. That is the main challenge to maintain. To maintain balance with the political parties. Because the political parties are not totally fair, they are not as fair as needed. So we have to make an effort to make a balance with the political parties.*

Undoubtedly, the political parties have influence over the development priorities of Nepal. They galvanise and organise the public and reputedly represent their demands. Government bureaucrats affirmed that political party demands represented those of the people:

*Their [political party] demands are the demand of the people. Road, street light, drinking water, sanitation, solid waste management, etc., etc. The demands of the people is the demand of the political parties (LSMC Executive Officer).*

For better or for worse, the political parties—even when unelected—are influential in development decision making. The implications of this for DRR are significant. Without public accountability, political parties have less reason to embrace proactive public safety measures such as non-structural and structural mitigation. Additionally, increased funding for DRR at the local levels may just lead to increased misappropriation of public funds. However, beyond the muck and the mire, political parties remain key to understanding mainstreaming DRR throughout the government of Nepal. They can either broker positive policy change or prevent it altogether. The rest of this chapter is focused on better understanding how political parties may influence this policy dynamic.

### **8.3 Political Party Election Manifestos: The Rhetoric of DRR**

The discussion turns its attention to the extent to which political parties have included DRR in their 2013 election manifestos. Election manifestos are important documents to assess because they represent the culmination of party analysis of what will win an election and should then form the backbone of a

party's policy formation once elected to government. As well, depending on the content found in the central manifestos one would later expect it to also be discussed by the district level respondents as well.

### 8.3.1 Nepali Congress 2013 Election Manifesto and DRR

Although the term disaster risk reduction is not used explicitly in the 2013 CA election manifesto, it does mention specific elements of DRR including embankment building, Chure Hill conservation, climate change awareness and prevention, sustainable development, and the construction of *environmentally friendly infrastructure*. Table 8-1 outlines translated key statements from the manifesto that relate to disaster management and disaster risk reduction.

*Table 8-1. Excerpts from Nepali Congress Party Election Manifesto (2013)*

Document Heading	Statement
Sustainable Development	Sustainable development is the goal of Nepali congress. While using the natural resources, we should keep the future generation in mind. They should not be deprived of their right to live happily (p. 31).
Irrigation and Watershed Conservation	<p>Technical studies of at least two inter-basin water transfer project will be completed and will be brought into implementation. Likewise, master plan will be formulated and implemented to make irrigation facility available throughout the year in all the cultivable land of Tarai region. <b>While implementing the irrigation planning, technology for reduction of water induced disaster will also be implemented side by side.</b> Watershed conservation program will be conducted throughout Nepal.</p> <p>Special priority will be given to make irrigation available in two million hectares of land of Tarai region throughout the year, to build embankments in the rivers and for forest management. Budget will be allocated and programs will be formulated accordingly (p. 39).</p>
Tarai-Madhes special	<p><b>100 km of embankments will be constructed every year to minimize the side effects of floods.</b> While constructing the embankments, housing arrangements will be made for the landless Dalit families in the reclamation ground. Embankments that are built on both sides of the rivers in Tarai will be developed as motorable roads.</p> <p>For the protection of biological and agricultural land in Tarai, conservation of Chure-Bhawar watershed will be conducted as a campaign program (p. 52).</p>

	<p><b>Chure Conservation Program</b> will be made effective to create environmental balance, to maintain bio-diversity and for river control in the Tarai. Special program will be brought in order to prevent the growing desertification in Tarai.</p> <p>Special planning and structure will be made for rescue, relief and resettlement of the victims of natural disaster (p. 61).</p>
Science, technology, research and development	<p>Nepal Congress will favour the policy of spending budget equivalent to 1% of the GDP every year for the expansion of the national research capacity on the issues like agricultural technology, food processing, information technology, industrial technology, economics, social science, strategic science, <b>climate change prevention</b> and environment &amp; biodiversity conversation (p. 46).</p>
Environment	<p>In order to reduce air pollution in the main cities including Kathmandu, industries and motor vehicles will be replaced with less polluting technologies.</p> <p>Effective programs will be conducted as a campaign in order to keep the important river-streams and waterbodies pollution free.</p> <p>The citizens will be made aware about climate change and its adverse effects. It will also be included in the formal education.</p> <p>Infrastructure development will be made environment friendly.</p> <p>Special policies will be formulated to stop the use of plastic bags. Manufacturing of environment-friendly bags will be encouraged (p. 54).</p>
Natural Resources Management	<p><b>The potential impact of climate change</b> or man-made or natural factors on natural resources will be studied and will be addressed.</p> <p>In compliance to the international treaties and agreements (where Nepal is a state party) related to the protection, promotion and sustainable use of natural resources, amendments will be done in the related policies and regulations and institutional arrangements will be made for their effective implementation.</p> <p>In order to solve the problem of destruction of houses, settlement and land in large part of Nepal's Tarai region and in the hills in the long term, <b>Chure-Bhawar region will be conserved</b>. For that, Chure region conservation program will be conducted as a national</p>

	campaign.  Natural disasters will be reduced as a campaign (p. 55).
Problem of Squatters and unsafe housing	Safe and healthy housing construction and income-generating programs will be conducted targeting the landless, poor, and socially and economically backward class. <b>Families residing in places with high risks of floods or other disasters will be transferred to safer places by constructing new housing</b> (p. 65)

### 8.3.2 CPN-UML 2013 Election Manifesto and DRR

Table 8-2 presents an overview of key statements related to DRR and DM. These statements come directly from the English language version of the CPN-UML 2013 election manifesto. The term DRR is not found, but there are DRR initiatives in the manifesto including: embankment building, reducing climate change effects, conservation of the *Chure* region, and notably enforcement of earthquake resilient building construction.

*Table 8-2. Excerpts from CPN-UML Party Election Manifesto (2013)*

Document Heading	Statement
Directive Principals	The main political aim is to establish Federal Democratic Republic and to create socialism-oriented independent economy. Other principles include...balanced, environment friendly and distributive development... (p. 10)
Vision	Protection of Tarai through construction of "People's Embankment" projects (p. 27)
Roadmap for Economic and Social Transformation	The public sector will also lead the process to ensure equitable development of the social sector, guarantee of minimum employment, poverty reduction, <b>environmental protection and development</b> , balanced regional development, industrial security and economic development (
Problems of Landless and Homeless People	The state will provide a housing facility to the families of the victims of natural disasters (p. 38)
Natural Resources, Environment and Urban Development	Minimum 40 percent green (forest) area will be conserved. Productivity of forest areas will be increased by ensuring effective conservation and management of the forest resources...  Sustainable conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem will be made effective. State will act responsibility to minimise the effects of climate change and enhance the capacity of



	<p>Nepalese citizens to face climate change challenges (p. 41)</p> <p><b>To protect the <i>Chure</i> region, the green belt of Nepal,</b> disastrous human settlements and unplanned agriculture sectors will be managed through systemic options. Establishment of environmental hazardous industries will be completely prohibited. People residing around the <i>Chure</i> region will be provided with modern energy facilities in order to minimize over-exploitation of natural resources.</p> <p><b>The “People’s Embankment” programme,</b> which was initiated by the previous CPN (CPN-UML) government will be intensified. New dams will be constructed in all major rivers of Tarai-Madhes. Land reclamation, forest area extension and housing for landless people will be other key priorities to be included in the development plans (p. 42).</p>
Urbanisation and Housing Development	<p>Planned urbanisation, easy supply of drinking water, electricity and other facilities, garbage management and special greenery development programmes will be implemented in order to make clean, great and beautiful Kathmandu Valley and other cities. <b>Mandatory provisions will be made to ensure earthquake resistant building constructions</b> (p. 42).</p>
Identity of Tarai/Madhesh People: Progress of the Entire Nation	<p>Special programmes will be implemented to address problems of poverty, scarcity and underdevelopment in Tarai-Madhesh. Serious attention will be given to resolve border invasion, violent crimes, <b>natural disasters</b> and social discrimination in those areas (p. 46).</p>

### 8.3.3 Maoist 2013 Election Manifesto and DRR

Table 8-3 presents an overview of key statements related to DRR found within the translated version of the 2013 Maoist election manifesto. Although not explicit in referring to DRR the election manifesto has statements about mitigating losses from floods and landslides, Chure Hill conservation, sustainable development, and notably the establishment of a National Disaster Management Authority.

Table 8-3. Excerpts from Maoist-Centre Party Election Manifesto (2013)

Document Heading	Statement
General	Every person has a right to security from natural disasters.
Forests and Environment	<p>Rules and regulations will be made for the management of community forests and focus will be given for the maximum utilization of forest resources through their commercial development.</p> <p>Special attention will be given towards <b>Environmental Balance for Sustainable Development</b>. Any activities against that will be strictly prohibited.</p> <p>In order to protect Tarai-madhes area from desertification, <b>Chure-bhawar will be declared as a Conservation area</b> and the responsibility for its protection and the legitimate use will be given to the inhabitants there.</p> <p>In order to maintain healthy environment by promoting greenery in the urban areas, Urban Forest Development Program will be carried out with priority. Necessary steps will be taken to prevent environmental imbalance in the hilly region.</p> <p>Effective programs will be formulated to control urban and industrial pollution.</p> <p>Environmental conventions to which Nepal is a State Party will be effectively implemented.</p>
Irrigation and Water Related Disaster Control	<p>Revolution will be brought in the irrigation sector through large and medium types of irrigation projects in Tarai (in addition to the underground irrigation projects) and medium and small types of irrigation projects in the hills and mountainous area, and through new technology based projects.</p> <p>Focus will be given on the construction of agricultural ponds, canals and lift irrigation for the reliable irrigation in the fields on the bank of rivers in the hills.</p> <p>Short-term and long term planning will be made and implemented for the mitigation of losses during rainy season due to landslides in the hills and floods in the Tarai.</p> <p>Arrangements will be made to provide employment opportunities to the local communities <b>through 'People's Embankment' project in Tarai region</b>. Flood related disasters will be reduced through the construction of embankments in large and medium-sized rivers in the next 10 years and in the remaining and necessary rivers in the next 20 years. Special programs will be brought to protect the villages and towns from floods and landslides.</p> <p>Our country is highly vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters like earthquake, water-related disasters, climate change etc. Therefore, <b>initiatives will be made towards dealing with the natural disasters in a planned, systematic</b></p>

Document Heading	Statement
	<b>and procedural way.</b> In this regard, necessary revision of 'National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2009' will be done and National Disaster Management Authority will be formed as soon as possible for effective disaster management under the leadership of Central Executive Head and action will be taken.

### 8.3.4 Discussion of Political Party 2013 Manifestos

Mining the 2013 second Constituent Assembly election manifestos of the *Big Three* parties for DRR proved surprising- more content was found than expected. There are aspects of DRR included in each of the manifestos, dealt with through mostly technical and broad statements. For instance, the CPN-UML makes specific mention of ensuring earthquake resistant building construction (a technical solution) and the NC state that “*natural disasters will be reduced as a campaign*” (presented in broad terms with no implementation details; emphasis added by author). It is apparent that disasters and minimising their consequences is politically expedient enough to warrant being an item in their election platforms. Interestingly the term DRR was not used explicitly in any of the manifestos, suggesting that parties and the people they are trying to represent are not widely aware of Hyogo Framework for Action terminology.

The parties have prioritised climate change adaptation and other environmental factors. There is a clear link between development and environmental degradation (e.g. “*infrastructure development will be made environment friendly*”, “*environmental protection and development*”). The direct connection between poorly implemented development and increased disaster risks (i.e. road construction) is not evident. Perhaps acknowledging this fact in a manifesto may be seen to implicate the parties in past development failures. Both the NC and Maoists commit to enforcing existing international environmental treaties to which Nepal is a signatory.

Looking at all three manifestos, one might be inclined to think the only disaster risk in Nepal is flooding in the Tarai. Tarai flooding has several major components in each of the manifestos: 1. large-scale building of embankments and 2. conservation of the Chure-Bhawar<sup>36</sup> ecology. There are several possible

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<sup>36</sup> As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, the *Chure* Hills (also known as Siwalik) are geologically and ecologically fragile hill region that marks the boundary between the

explanations for Tarai flood reduction prominence in the manifestos. Firstly, the frequency and magnitude of flooding in this region adds to its political salience. Additionally, the Tarai is an important geopolitical region for political parties because of its high population density<sup>37</sup>, its importance in agricultural production and food security, and due to the on-going Madhesi tensions (discussed in Chapter 4). Additionally, the political parties are under foreign pressure from India because of the cross border flood hazard shared by both nation-states. In contrast, only one reference to earthquake risk reduction strategy is found in the CPN-UML manifesto. This is remarkable considering how well the earthquake risk in Nepal is publicised, particularly in Kathmandu Valley. The Maoist party was the only party to mention landslide mitigation, a hill/mountain hazard. What is clear from this is that at the time of the drafting of the manifestos, earthquake and landslide risk reduction were not as politically salient as Tarai flooding.

The Maoist manifesto is by far the most comprehensive in dealing with DRR and DM issues. It states that “*every person has a right to security from natural disasters*” suggesting DRR is human right that ought to be provided as a public good. Along with statements made about embankments and Chure conservation, they also point to institutional gaps and weaknesses in the Nepal government that they would amend through the establishment of a National Disaster Management Authority with executive level oversight. The Maoist manifesto also refers to revision of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management 2009, a document that was drafted while the Maoists led the GON in 2009. These institutional changes have likely come through advocacy by the INGO/NGO, NRRC, and academic communities concerned with disaster and development in Nepal (IFRC 2011; NRRC- Flagship 5 2016; Jones et al. 2014). The Maoists are the only party to have framed DRM in a way that suggests their party prioritised DRM regardless of public demand.

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Tarai and the start of the foothills to the Himalayans. Their environmental integrity plays a significant role in minimizing the risk of floods (Pokhrel 2013; Shrestha 2012). Strategies to protect them include environmental conservation, livelihood strategies, and natural resource management.

<sup>37</sup> Nearly half of Nepali households live in the Tarai region (n= 2,527,558) as compared with Hill region (n= 2,532,041) and Mountain (n=363,698) (GON 2012).

## 8.4 Reality of Mainstreaming DRR Through the Political Parties

It is one thing for the political parties to have included aspects of DRR into their election manifestos and quite another for them to actually advocate for its implementation and make it a party platform. Whether or not its inclusion in the election manifestos is mere rhetoric or a substantive policy direction within the parties is explored in the subsequent sections. It does so by examining the extent to which DRR has been promoted by the party central office, and also by assessing the level of awareness of the respondents.

### 8.4.1 Is DRR being promoted within and throughout the political parties?

After the election manifesto, another indicator of whether DRR was a substantive party platform would be whether or not a party has invested in DM/DRR training, awareness raising, or programmes.

*We have not conducted any programs directly, where we train or educate cadres or people to tell them to prepare for disaster management. I don't think any other party has done that. If anyone is saying he has done that he is bull-shitting (NC Central).*

The work that was found at the central level was either very preliminary or none at all. The CPN-UML party was the only party to have established a DRR desk within its party central office. Its creation was initiated by the respondent, an CPN-UML Constituent Assembly member who is a high profile (former Education Minister) political champion and advocate for DRR in Nepal owing to his doctoral work and involvement in HFA and SFDRR negotiations. Not yet actualised, his long term vision was for the desk to serve as the central coordination point for mainstreaming DRR within and throughout the party down to the district and local levels:

*And just channelling from the top down it is easy. Just like this establishment of the department in the central level. Just establishment especially the desk in the central level. And just make a circular like that directives and all the things. It is circulated to the lower level, then definitely there will be department and cell and nucleus there in the party regional level, and local level. Like this.*

At the time of the interview, the DRR desk had a low profile within the CPN-UML party administration (located within the Education and Human Resource Department) but represented a step forward in raising the profile of DRR throughout the party.

The CPN-UML representative was not only promoting DRR within his party, but as a member of the Constituent Assembly, he was also advocating DRR within the CA and was planning to lead consultation efforts once the legislation on Disaster Risk Management reached the parliament (see Chapter 6). He spoke of adapting the SFDRR to the Nepal context, *“I am so much motivated and guided by the HFA... [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction] will be the guiding principle I think so, for making our vision on our Nepalese context”*. His outlook and perspectives were unique in that he had advanced studies in DRR and was active in promoting DRM both within his party and throughout the Government of Nepal. His work is again discussed in the earthquake post-script concluding this chapter.

Of the three central level respondents, only the Maoist reported that they had included DRR in their party manifesto but admitted that no detailed policies, plans, or programmes had been established to facilitate implementation. The respondent did speak of future plans for the party to conduct DRR awareness and training programmes for cadres and the public and he spoke about the credence given to the issue through the party Chairman:

*Talking about the party, the documents are written by our Chairman. After the National Convention two years ago, every document that has been written includes this issue. The Chairman has mentioned this issue with great importance and he will present that as an important thing in the next National Convention. Like the government has different ministries, we also have different departments that look after different things. Like the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Environment, we also have similar departments that look after this issue. The department makes solid programs; the proposal however is kept forward by the Chairman of the party (Maoist Central).*

This was motivated by a belief that *“disasters have created a huge impact and adverse effects on the overall development of the country.”* In his words the party had *“thought deeply”* about DRR and CCA and would discuss at length during the party convention scheduled in ten months’ time (January 2016).

Both the CPN-UML and the Maoist respondents indicated that the party mechanisms (e.g. party members, organisational structure) could be used to promote and advocate DRR initiatives from central to local levels. The NC representative offered a contrasting opinion. He was a member of the CA who represented a Kathmandu Valley constituency, and demonstrated less awareness of DRR than the other two central respondents. Yet his responses

are likely more representative of the majority of political party members at the central level. When he was asked if he believed that disasters had adversely affected Nepal's development trajectory, he responded with "*no, not really*" and indicated that it had been almost 90 years since the 1934 earthquake. He did admit that the absence of a large-scale disaster in Kathmandu Valley resulted in people "*wrongly taking it for granted*". Unlike the other two representatives, his outlook was far more Kathmandu centric rather than broadly party focused. He acknowledged that smaller disasters, "*limited to 2-3 districts*", had occurred in other regions of the country. It is telling that he did not see the agglomeration of smaller regional disasters (outside Kathmandu Valley) as negatively impacting Nepal's development trajectory.

At first the NC (Central) representative confused DRR with disaster management. Once it was clarified he strongly discouraged the suggestion that the NC political party could play a role in advancing DRR implementation.

*...our main focus is to do organizational work for the politics. Create political agendas. Create networks. Training of the cadres. That is our main agendas. If you try to thrust something that really doesn't fit too much, it is not really going to be that effective. It will look very nice in your report and books. But more than the political parties I think the government has to be responsible.*

His insistence was pragmatic. He worried that the Congress "*old fogey's*" whom he described as "*forty-five year old guys sitting in the village*" would hear about DRR and think "*this is not for me.*" Instead he suggested that the youth wing of the party would be more receptive to embracing DRR and would be less of a "*waste of time*". His comments indicate that there is a resistance to new development approaches and that DRR is not a topic that warrants getting on the 'political agenda' in the Nepali Congress.

#### **8.4.2 How well was the concept of DRR understood by respondents?**

With no or very minimal central party led activities related to DRR, this next section explores how respondents understood risk reduction and its link with development. To begin with, general awareness of DRR within the Constituent Assembly was deemed low:

*Many people don't have the knowledge of this. Like your country Canada. The many politicians they don't have, in Nepal also. We are 601 members*

*of parliaments in the house, but almost they are new. More than 80% are the new members of parliament. And they don't have enough knowledge (CPN-UML Central).*

However, amongst the respondents there was little doubt that certain development activities are exacerbating disaster risks in Nepal. A respondent from the CPN-UML (Solukhumbu) clearly delineated the trade-offs of current economic and physical development in his district with increased disaster risks:

*Unless there is electricity and roads, people don't get the feeling of development. Like just to charge a cell phone, electricity is required. Road is required in order to transport machineries and other materials for building an electricity project...We don't have sufficient budget to build roads by avoiding too much destruction and preventing disaster in future like floods and landslides. Development has become a necessity while it is also inviting disasters (CPN-UML Solukhumbu).*

The importance of road construction for Nepal's development was earlier discussed in Chapter 4. Roads were frequently discussed by respondents as a development agenda that is increasing disaster risk. For example, one central level respondent identified the link between road construction and landslide risk:

*While constructing roads, we are not doing that in a planned way. Enough study of the land and the adverse effects that construction can bring in future is not done. Without any technical team, dozers are used to dig the roads which results in landslides. The digging of roads in a haphazard way and the use of machines that cause harm to the environment should be stopped (Central Maoist).*

This linkage was also identified by another central level political respondent, as evidenced by his recognition that retaining walls were a missing but necessary feature for reducing the risk of landslides:

*...of the roads we built, most of the roads in rural area, the excavator goes and digs up the road and you have a plain road. The kind of roads you have in Canada, US, Japan, Europe, we don't have that. We don't have the roads that have all the retaining wall (Central NC).*

While roads were the most frequently discussed, they were not the only example given of development activities exacerbating disaster risks. The built environment was also identified. A respondent indicated how the built environment in Nepal is not able to withstand earthquakes:

*So whether you look at the construction here, whether it is houses, public buildings, temples, roads—none of them—the airport! They are not prepared for it. So our infrastructure, I think except for a few buildings, now I think the government has been quite strict to make it earthquake proof. As far as I am aware our parliament [building] is; it can go up to resist about 8 Richter scale. But I think most of the other infrastructures will go down if there is a huge earthquake (NC Central).*

Finally, two other examples were mentioned of the development-disaster linkage. One district respondent mentioned unregulated sand and stone mining



from rivers<sup>38</sup> as an activity that was increasing disaster risk (NC Bardiya).

Another example was provided by a respondent who discussed copper mining and its role in causing a landslide (NC Solukhumbu).

*...three years ago there is one village... it is a disastrous village because there is one copper mine. [The copper mine] are digging under the village and there is a big landslide there. And various houses destroyed from that landslide (NC Solukhumbu).*

It is clear from the responses that the political party members understood how development activities exacerbate the risk of disasters. Conversely (and more obviously) respondents understood that disasters destroy key infrastructure. Again, the loss of roads was used to illustrate this point, particularly in Bardiya district:

*...the floods have been causing a huge destruction on the infrastructures like roads and bridges of Bardiya district every year (CPN-UML Bardiya).*

*Similarly, the floods have destroyed or created threat on the physical infrastructure like road and bridges (Maoist Bardiya).*

However, in the majority of cases, respondents demonstrated a narrow view of what constitutes development. Respondents spoke mainly of how physical infrastructure development (e.g. roads, built environment, mining) exacerbated disaster risks (the exception being the Maoist respondent from Bardiya who discussed the issue of landlessness). As one respondent said, it is through physical infrastructure development that people get the “*feeling of development*.” Rarely did they discuss the development-disaster link in relation to other development determinants, i.e. how weak and corrupted political institutions exacerbates disaster risk. The closest the respondents came to implicating the dysfunctional nature of Nepali politics were seen in two responses from Bardiya district:

*The past and present leadership and the lack of will and vision in them to do something for this district is the main reason for the backwardness of Bardiya (Maoist Bardiya).*

*The bureaucrats and the political leaders need to bring changes to their behaviour (NC Bardiya).*

All of the political party representatives from the districts had been lifelong residents of the district and active in politics for many years. None of them

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<sup>38</sup> The stones and sand extracted from rivers are sold, crushed and used for construction purposes. Because of DDC lack of oversight of private industry (Shrestha 2014) the volume of sediment being extracted is outpacing the deposits resulting in an increased flood risk and faster river flows (Shrestha 2013).

reported that they had received training in DM or DRR. In Bardiya district, all three party chairmen were informed about risk reduction strategies for flooding and each felt that flooding was adversely impacting the development of the district. All three had been chairmen of their parties during the torrential rain of 2014 that caused the massive Karnali River flood in Bardiya and surrounding districts. Each respondent offered a different perspective on DRR focusing on the environmental, social or technical aspects of risk reduction. For example, when asked what DRR meant, the NC representative talked about the importance of environmental conservation to reduce flood risks:

*People should be made aware about the adverse effects of deforestation, uncontrolled extraction of stones and sand and things like that. Environment has to be preserved so that landslides and floods do not take place (NC Bardiya).*

He pointed to the fact that in the NC manifesto there is mention of building river embankments in order to reduce the risk of floods.

The Maoist chairman spoke about the social consequences and the high vulnerability of the displaced and landless within the district:

*Floods are indeed impacting the overall development and growth of Bardiya. The floods have swept away human settlements and destroyed lives and properties. It's obvious that it attracts everyone's attention towards it. People's lives have been affected and a big question has been aroused on how to do the proper management of flood victims. People have lost everything and have become landless (Maoist Bardiya).*

He further added:

*We have been giving priority to building houses. The homeless people need a place to live; they can't always live under trees or in tents. But still our main priority is river control or minimizing the risk of fires and wildlife and to provide relief to the people. We believe in adopting mitigating measures in order to reduce the risk of disasters.*

He mentioned that climate change was addressed in the Maoist manifesto but did not think there was any mention of DRR or disaster management (as discussed above, the Maoist election manifesto was the most comprehensive in its inclusion of DRR/DM issues). Despite this, he said that the party was “actively working to aware the people about disasters and finding ways for reducing the risk of disasters.”

The Bardiya CPN-UML respondent was a structural engineer by profession. He had been active in promoting building code implementation in the district capital

municipality Guleryia and his view and understanding of DRR clearly came from his professional knowledge:

*Disasters are unpredictable and inevitable. We cannot completely control the disasters but we can work to minimize the risk or destruction it can bring. In order to minimize the risk of floods, embankments should be built in the rivers. Similarly, the families residing around the bank of rivers who are at high risk of floods should be made aware... Moreover, modern technologies for disaster risk reduction should be used and made available (CPN-UML Bardiya).*

His party had “made a commitment” by including DRR in their 2013 election manifesto. It “was an important issue” that his party would work to reduce disaster risks when his party was in government (at the time of the interview the central government was led by a coalition of NC and CPN-UML, and the Maoist were in opposition). He boasted that the NC and CPN-UML coalition government has increased river control spending from 80 million rupees to 390 million rupees in light of the severity of the 2014 floods.

In Solukhumbu, the party chairmen for the NC and CPN-UML (Maoist respondent was unavailable at the time of the field visit) also showed awareness of DRR. Unlike Bardiya, a large scale disaster affecting a large portion of the district had not occurred in recent memory, yet frequent smaller disasters (for example a fire that destroyed eight homes the previous year) were common. Because of the fragile hill/mountain terrain of Solukhumbu district the risks from development projects are much greater than in the flat Tarai and the chairmen seemed more sensitized to the risks that development brought.

*Development has become the must but at the same time it has brought destruction. People complain a lot about the destruction (CPN-UML Solukhumbu).*

The CPN-UML representative in particular showed a strong understanding of DRR. He talked of the “serious” impact disasters are having on the districts social and economic development discussing how a flood in Wakku VDC displaced many people and caused two schools to be relocated and a glacial lake outburst that destroyed five trail bridges. He had not received any specific disaster management training so his awareness of the issues surrounding disaster and development came from his personal experiences as a party member and lifelong resident of Solukhumbu. He described himself as “the son of an ordinary farmer” and linked his political efforts with his personal experience:

*I was active in such kind of works from the past and I believed that every one of us has to give our best from our side. These days, we are focusing on one toilet in each house. This will help reduce the spread of diseases and prevent epidemics. I am inspired from the beginning because my mother died of dysentery when I was 2 years old. As I grew up I developed a thought to do something for the society because of which I am involved in this.*

His counterpart, the NC (Solukhumbu) Chairman, spoke about the various campaigns the district Nepal Congress party had worked on to minimize disaster risks in the district. For example, each July the NC party in Solukhumbu campaigns against deforestation. He spoke of a sub-committee that used to exist at the central level that had been working on the issue of disasters but it had not been functioning in the past three years. When it was functioning it would circulate documents throughout the party. The work that the NC was doing on deforestation was a local initiative brought about because of the effect it was having on the district. He also said the NC cadres received disaster management training on an annual basis. However, this was not comprehensive training, but rather when the party was running an annual meeting they would include an awareness session on disasters.

#### **8.4.3 Discussion**

This section has answered the first question posed in the introduction: To what extent is DRR being promoted within and throughout the political parties? What is rhetoric and what is reality? As found, there is very little promotion of DRR, despite elements of its inclusion within each of the election manifestos, within and throughout the parties. Despite this, there are a few striking things that comes from the above discussion.

Firstly, at the central level there is the early start of a possible political advocacy coalition forming, as seen with the establishment of the DRR desk within the CPN-UML party. Likewise, in the Maoist party, DRR/DM had been included in its election manifesto and the respondent indicated that the Party Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, (who would later become Prime Minister in 2016) was supportive of DRR. Efforts to integrate DRR from the central level are at an early stage of implementation in two of the three parties (CPN-UML and Maoist) and apparently non-existent in the other (NC).

The central level respondent who strongly discouraged the idea of his party playing a role in pushing for DRR was the only outlier opinion found. His opinions were distinct, strongly opined, and out of the three, perhaps the least rhetorical. He could not see local level party members promoting DRR, but he did see the youth wing as amenable to the idea. His response suggests that policy innovation and change is not embraced by the establishment, whereas the youth wing is more amenable to new policies and change. His frankness tempers the other positive responses provided by his counterparts, and certainty seems true in light of the background discussion presented in Chapter 4 into Nepal's government and political history.

However, the district respondents in particular, clearly grasped the development-disaster nexus. Their understanding of DRR has not come through specialised training or central level party interventions. Instead, the district chairmen (in particular the CPN-UML respondent from Bardiya) understood DRR through their own lived experiences as political party chairmen and local residents. This seems to suggest—at least the district level—party members may not be as dismissive of DRR as the above central level respondent suggests. Nor should district level political party chairmen be discounted when considering shifting the DM paradigm to DRR.

## **8.5 Barriers and Opportunities for Political Parties to Influence Policy Paradigm Change**

Having established that political parties are key actors in mainstreaming DRR throughout government development sectors, this section examines the barriers and opportunities to this proposition. One major barrier has already been identified. In Chapter 4, the case of the rampant corruption within the Nepal Electricity Authority was discussed. And the obvious opportunity political parties have to influence change is to push for development projects through the District Development Committee to include risk reduction approaches. The following discussion is based on what the respondents identified as party barriers and opportunities.

This research shows that political party members see their ability to influence DRR implementation as dependent on internal party process (i.e. the party needs to establish a clear central level vision concerning DRR and conduct

training and awareness initiatives). For example, a district level respondent suggested his party could do more for DRR at the district level if the central NC party initiated training and programmes for cadres:

*The party should provide trainings about DRR to its members and cadres from time to time. This will help create a better influence and increase our ability to do DRR works. We can do that. It's due to lack of programme in the party about that. If the party realises that as an important thing and includes that in the plannings of the party, we can obviously do that (NC Bardiya).*

Coupled with the above, two of the central level respondents agreed that the absence of a clear party vision of DRR was hampering efforts for the party to advocate for DRR. The Maoist (Central) believed:

*a concept on DRR has to be built in the parties but in order to bring that into action, plans and programmes have to be made.... The state has to have vision regarding this issue.*

The CPN-UML (Central) representative agreed that it was important that:

*all political parties have to mention, clearly mention, their ideas and visions and goals regarding DRR and CCA in their election manifesto.*

The need for party vision was echoed by the NC (Solukhumbu) respondent as well, mentioning the lack of “concrete vision” around DRR in his party.

Another obvious barrier that came from the data is the current institutional arrangements created by the out-dated legislation (see Chapter 6). One respondent described the current institutional arrangements as keeping the political parties ‘in the wings’.

*But actively the Nepal government policy and legal framework, disaster management and disaster risk reduction and co-ordination are with the CDO main coordination. And DDC, LDOs and politics parties, they are the wings, they are a component. But the coordinating body is CDO is the government policy and legal framework (NC Solukhumbu).*

In the districts, the connection between the district development committee (DDC)—responsible for oversight of district development—and its potential role in integrating DRR was missed by most political party respondents. For example, a respondent discussed DRR in terms of technical and short term fixes offered by the District Disaster Relief Committee, overseen by the Chief District Officer (a staff member appointed by MOHA):

*We have DDRC under the chairmanship of CDO which works to minimize the risk the destruction caused by the floods by adopting risk reduction*

*techniques before the monsoon starts. In the flood last year, the DDRC worked in a very effective way on the rescue works (CPN-UML Bardiya).*

His comment suggests the issue of DRR is not being addressed as a development issue by the district development committee in any substantive way.

One party respondent, echoing the concerns of the district and local bureaucrats in Chapter 7, cited the frequent transfer of the LDO as a general barrier for working on development issues in Solukhumbu:

*The problem in this district is that the office heads are frequently changing. If we talk about LDO, our current LDO came in this district just about 5 months ago. The LDOs are changed 2-3 times within a year. That is obviously not a good trend as development works will be hampered due to the frequent change in the LDOs. Around 10-11 months ago we sanctioned budget in various sectors for development works but we were not able to use the budget because of lack of LDO. Therefore, the challenge within the bureaucracy is that the office heads are changing frequently and they take time in taking over the responsibilities (CPN-UML Solukhumbu).*

In speaking with the respondents, it was clear that the allocation of funding for development works was another barrier to DRR. From the district perspective, having their party lead the government increased their prospects for large infrastructure funding. Funding is allocated politically rather than based on hazard and risk assessments.

*If the government is led by a single party, the party brings a lot of programmes as mentioned in their manifesto. But if it's a coalition government, the party cannot do all the programmes they want. For larger projects and programmes, national policies are formed and that drives the work on such projects. In case of smaller programmes, more programmes go to that place where there are more public demands, more public awareness and participation, and active political involvement. That, however, also depends on the districts, the political parties and the politicians (NC Solukhumbu).*

As mentioned in the above quote, public awareness of DRR was also discussed as a barrier for the party respondents at the district level. Without public pressure, the political parties had little motivation to advocate for DRR in government development projects.

*The public are not very much aware about this issue either. There are very few demands from the public for risk reduction works (Maoist Bardiya).*

*Actually disaster problem and issues is not the limelight in our country right now. This time Nepalese society and our communities are really talking about constitutional political process. This is our mainstreaming debate here (NC Solukhumbu).*

*Solukhumbu is a rural district and very less people are educated. Awareness level is very low. We have not been able to provide necessary awareness to people. Even here in the head quarter, there is the lack of awareness in many people (CPN-UML Solukhumbu).*

Finally, this section looks at the opportunities that came to light in the party respondents. An untapped opportunity exists for political parties to mobilize their cadres to actively mobilize to participate in DRR initiatives. The parties can influence change through their vast organisational structures. The NC party respondent in Solukhumbu reported that his party had cells in all thirty district VDCs and in the one municipality. This included nearly 10000 general members and 2500 active members throughout the district. In the CPN-UML (Solukhumbu) there are 41 members in the UML district committee, 1056 active members and 1500-1600 general members in the district. Additionally there are auxiliary organisations such as student and women associations affiliated with each party in the district. Already, in times of disaster, political parties mobilise their membership base to assist with response and relief:

*First of all, we asked all our members and cadres in this district for help. As per that, the cadres were deployed at different places to help the people who suffered the flood. We pressurized the government and requested various organization and people for immediate help. Our cadres worked together with them for providing rescue and relief for the victim (NC Bardiya).*

*When any disaster takes place, we immediately go to the affected area and help the people. I myself am actively involved in this. Our members reach the villages when there are fire cases. We believe that we have to help the people in need and during emergencies (CPN-UML Solukhumbu).*

Although much less frequently, party members are also mobilized for DRR work. In Solukhumbu district, both the NC and the CPN-UML reported that their party cadres volunteered during tree planting initiatives.

*Every year our Nepali congress, we planned a plantation program. This is in July. We launch a plantation program. Auspicious of our leader BP Koirala and we campaign against deforestation because of landslides and our water resources. Now I think this is a success here. We are hopeful and positive (NC Solukhumbu).*

Presumably, through central party visioning and awareness programme development, the parties can further mobilize their members for risk reduction activities.



## 8.6 Political Party DRR Influence and Advancement in Bardiya and Solukhumbu

Despite what the NC central respondent said—that it was a “waste of time” to integrate DRR throughout the party—over the course of this research it became apparent that party representatives were engaging in, albeit limited, DRR work. What is striking is the different approach being taken in each district.

In Bardiya, the primary DRR initiative political parties discussed was the Karnali River Control Project, a controversial large scale embankment building project aimed at reducing flood risk.

*We have been making some initiatives. Like, the office of Karnali River Control Project has been recently established in Rajapur. It's a huge project with an aim to control the Bheri and Karnali River in an organised way. When our party was in government we made initiatives for that and it has now been possible (Maoist Bardiya).*

As discussed above, embankment building featured prominently in all three election manifestos. Remarkably, the Bardiya respondents indicated that they were working in *coordination* to push for the embankment building and river control:

*For the river control in Rajapur, certain budget is also being allocated. As per the commitment of our party, the coalition government of the CPN-UML and Congress sanctioned budget for the risk reduction...” (CPN-UML Bardiya).*

*Similarly, the parties have come to the conclusion that a master plan has to be made for controlling the Babai River. If possible, a separate project like the Karnali River Control Project has to be started for the Babai River as well in order to reduce the water-borne disasters in the district (Maoist Bardiya).*

On the face of it, the multi-party coordination around embankment building appears to be a proactive DRR initiative. However, current thinking about risk reduction approaches in the Tarai suggests that embankments are not best practice. Embankments are exacerbating flood risk, since they are being constructed haphazardly and are not part of a comprehensive flood risk management strategy. A recent multi-agency report on the Karnali River 2014 flood reported:

“These embankments, however, are not part of a wider integrated flood risk management program...There is little upstream-downstream and right-left bank coordination. This is a problem because many of these projects are expected to take several years and the construction process will significantly influence flood patterns and the potential communities along the river face. Sedimentation rates and ‘safe failure’ principles are not being addressed” (ISET et al. 2015: 27).

Although the respondents made it appear that the embankments were coming from political party advocacy, in fact the politics of it was much greater. As previously mentioned (Chapter 4), Tarai flooding is a cross-border hazard shared with India. The funding and impetus for the embankments comes from India. This was revealed in an interview held at the central level with the Ministry of Irrigation (Department of Water Induced Disaster Prevention):

*That's why in cooperation the Indian Government also supported and the technologically and financially and the Nepal government is using the technology and mitigation works. Mostly we are making the embankment and river training works to the foothills up to the border of India and Nepal. The big projects are there. So these are the one part of the project, the central level projects because the India government support the Nepal Government in related to flood. These are the central level projects.... That is the name of the project, the Peoples Embankment.*

Absent from the Bardiya discussions was any mention of Chure hill conservation strategies (also found in all three election manifestos) or other approaches to flood risk reduction (e.g. flood resistant buildings, education strategies). The sole focus of each of the three party members was on embankment building. The DRR approaches discussed in Solukhumbu were different from Bardiya.

Firstly, the political parties in Bardiya did not speak about engaging in a coordinated strategy for DRR. Also the DRR approaches were much smaller in scale and more advocacy and livelihoods based. Tree planning and deforestation initiatives within the district have already been discussed as was the CPN-UML respondents efforts of hygiene promotion through his 'one toilet per house' strategy.

*And we lobbied to stop this mining project. Because of this we save the village and save the farmer and people's lives from further landslides (NC Solukhumbu).*

The political party respondents from Solukhumbu identified some intriguing and holistic DRR solutions. Although the effectiveness of their efforts are not under investigation, it is interesting how they framed the DRR work that was occurring. Their approaches were tailored to the local needs of the community. In the example of the 'one toilet' initiative, the respondent understood health as a component of a resilient district. This is further support for the conclusion that party respondents had a local understanding of DRR even without central level awareness and training campaigns.

### 8.6.1 Discussion

This section answers the final question posed in the introduction: How and why are political parties influencing DRR advancement in Bardiya and Solukhumbu? This section has uncovered two very distinct approaches taken by the political parties in Bardiya and Solukhumbu. The differences can obviously be attributed to the different geographies and hazards found in each district. The distinct way that the parties have approached DRR strategies may shed some light on what stimulates parties to adopt DRR approaches in the first place, 1) external funding and political pressure, 2) and local knowledge and understanding of risk.

In Bardiya, political parties reported that they are actively advocating for embankment construction. This makes sense since the district is frequently affected by floods. Each party took some ownership for the establishment of the Karnali River Control Office and spoke of it as a coordinated multi-party strategy. Why they galvanized around this approach rather than Chure Hills conservation for example is difficult to answer. Their coordination around embankment construction sounds eerily similar to the coordinated round table approach of the 'all party mechanisms', which resulted in a well-documented tactic for dividing the spoils of development budgets. While there is no evidence in this research that supports the contention that the political parties are profiting from the embankment funds, in light of the widespread and systemic party corruption it should not be discounted. Embankments also fit Nepal's development appetite for physical infrastructure solutions that allow for 'high-optic' development solutions. By 'high-optic' it is meant large scale infrastructure that visibly shows development progress. Notwithstanding these negative associations, Bardiya's example also demonstrates the power that external funding and pressure has on stimulating DRR promotion.

The type of DRR work the political parties undertook in Solukhumbu is more interesting because it was beyond the influence of external DRR interventions. Prior to the earthquake, Solukhumbu had received very few DRR interventions from NGOs. There was far less donor funding for mitigation in Solukhumbu than in Bardiya. As such, the DRR solutions proposed by the party respondents were much smaller in scale, less coordinated amongst the parties, and addressed

more livelihood issues that reflected the physical environment of the district. What this data shows is that left to their own devices, the Solukhumbu respondents devised strategies that addressed their particular locality concerns. As much as the respondents advocated for centralized 'visioning' of DRR, this section clearly illustrates that top-down party prescriptions could overshadow locally derived DRR solutions.

## **8.7 Post-Earthquake Post Script**

The only significant political development found during the post-earthquake research was in the development of the National Campaign for Disaster Risk Reduction (NC for DRR), a coalition of thirteen MP's who were actively campaigning for stronger DRM legislation. The central level UML member discussed in this chapter was its chief organizer. While the draft DRM legislation was waiting to be read by parliament for years, the earthquake stimulated its progression through the Constituent Assembly. As discussed in Chapter 6, the draft legislation as currently written would establish a National Disaster Management Authority under MOHA. The NC for DRR group reported during an interview, that they managed to have the legislation sent back for revisions to MOHA. One of the key stipulations was the NDMA was to be autonomous and under the prime ministers executive office. At the time of writing (January 2016) no further progress on the legislation had been made. The development of a small political coalition is encouraging. How effective they may be in the future as a coalition is yet to be determined.

## **8.8 Chapter Summary**

Over the course of recent Nepali history political parties have either been banned outright (e.g. during the Partyless Panchayat System discussed in Chapter 4) or they have been suppressed by an despotic monarchy for periods of time. In these times, the political parties coalesced, fought, and succeeded in achieving representative power through multi-party democracy. Arguably they are at their best when up against autocratic adversary. Now that Nepal is progressing on a path of a republic federal democracy, political parties have overreached in their pursuit for power. Evidence of this is found in their untoward influence on the bureaucracy and by their corrupt behaviour at the district and local levels. Perhaps because they have been dismissed as serious leaders of

DRR facilitation and implementation, no prior research had been done on their perceptions and understanding of DRR. This chapter set out to fill this gap in knowledge by examining how the *Big Three* political parties understood and were integrating DRR and their role as potential policy brokers. Surprisingly, party members are found to be knowledgeable and supportive of DRR (with some caveats) and opportunities exist for integrating DRR throughout the parties.

Disasters and reducing the risk of disasters is a politically salient topic in Nepal, otherwise elements of it would not have been included in all three parties' election manifestos. Based on the results of this chapter, the political parties are willing participants for integrating DRR throughout and within the party. To date, there have not been any large DRR awareness campaigns targeted at the parties that would make them aware of DRR as prescribed by UNISDR or the Hyogo Framework for Action. Very few of the party members interviewed had received any formal training in DM or DRR. Their understanding came largely through exposure to disaster in their district, or through exposure to events like the Juri landslide and the Karnali River floods. They understood the causal mechanisms and the intersection of development with disasters through witnessing the landslide consequences caused by increased rudimentary road construction. And they understood the social and economic costs of disasters on Nepal's overall development. However, their understanding had significant limitations that will adversely impact efforts to integrate DRR into development processes if not addressed.

For better or worse, the political parties in Nepal influence and dominate development agendas. A complicating factor is that political parties have a myopic, and some say self-serving, view of development. Another limiting factor is that political parties prioritise DRR investment only in districts that are politically valuable for them. It is clear from the results of this research that DRR funding is strongly influenced by central level political influence. Budget is doled out not based on risk and hazard assessments, but based on political affiliations. One way to counteract this is through strong public awareness and local level advocacy. But according to one of the respondents, without central level affiliation, local level advocacy only brings smaller programmes to the districts. This unscientific and pork barrelled approach to DRR funding might be lessened once Nepal has transitioned into a federal state. A strong case then can be

made for DRM to become a provincial level responsibility, since provincial governments and elected provincial politicians would be more responsive to regional hazards and risk assessments.

Nepal's fixation on DRR development being physical infrastructure led is clearly witnessed amongst the political parties (as evidenced by embankment inclusion in all three election manifestos). Favouring embankment building in the Tarai over subtler and more effective methods of flood risk reduction—such as conservation of the Chure Hills—is part of the overall development ethos of Nepal. It is also likely that the parties have embraced embankments—so much so that they coordinate amongst themselves to advocate for them—because of the gains large scale infrastructure can yield. Embankments are tangible flood risk reduction initiatives that bring political and economic capital to local and district politicians. Encouragingly, in the absence of large scale development infrastructure possibilities (e.g. in Solukhumbu) and without central level manifesto guidance the party members discussed local livelihood and advocacy initiatives as methods for dealing with DRR. The efficacies of these solutions are unknown, but what is remarkable is that they were being discussed in relation to DRR signifying that district politicians had formulated local solutions. In the context of DRR integration throughout the party, it is essential that this local wisdom is not lost through top-down centralised campaigns.

These results have implications for the broader mainstreaming/integration research within the government. The current dysfunctional and intrusive relationship between the political parties and the bureaucracy proves troublesome for mainstreaming DRR. The grip that the political parties have on the bureaucracy means the political parties determine development priorities and activities. To this end, they are the policy brokers in Nepal. Referring back to the ACF model in Chapter 3, the policy broker is the one who mediates between the competing coalitions to determine which policy to enact. It is doubtful that the creators of the ACF envisioned the policy brokers to have the thuggish and unchecked qualities they display in Nepal, but nonetheless, it is the reality of the governance environment. Political parties are the policy brokers in Nepal, and their involvement can positively influence change, as evidenced by the post-earthquake formation of the central level National Campaign for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Their influence is so great that even if the empirical data reviewed in Chapters 6 and 7 had revealed a coherent and consistent mainstreaming DRR policy throughout the government, without the political parties buy-in at the district and local levels, DRR would not be realized. Efforts to integrate DRR throughout the government are challenged by the pressure exerted by the political parties at the DDC and VDC levels. The difficulty lies in that the political parties are the 'voice of the people', and those voices are not asking for DRR. Central government appointees, especially the LDO, are meant to be implementing DRR strategies, but their hands are tied through political pressures and lack of public demands. In this case, it is imperative that political parties integrate DRR awareness and training throughout in an attempt to persuade local level party representatives to incorporate DRR into development at the local and district levels.

As long as the status quo development approaches continues to benefit political party members there is little to no room for innovative DRR approaches and policy change. Current development implementation in Nepal is a closed system dominated by the parties, offering little room for innovations unless the political parties sanction them. Any real progress on DRR policy integration will only occur once DRR in Nepal is reframed as a politically viable alternative.

## 9 Discussion, Implications and Final Conclusions

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Over the last seven chapters, this research has traced *mainstreaming DRR* from its roots as a global neoliberal policy solution, followed its diffusion into Nepal's national development lexicon, and down throughout the government administrative levels. This chapter begins with a discussion of the two objectives that have framed this research. The second part of the chapter deals with the research implications and final conclusions.

### 9.1 Discussion: Understanding the Rhetoric and Reality of Mainstreaming DRR in Nepal

Chapter 1 outlined two main objectives for this research:

1. To critically interrogate the concept of mainstreaming DRR and the drivers behind its promotion as a disaster policy prescription;
2. To examine the rhetoric and reality of mainstreaming DRR throughout all levels of government in Nepal.

The first objective of this research was achieved in the literature review chapters 2 and 3 and is briefly summarized here. While it is a somewhat unorthodox approach for a thesis to use the literature review to further a research objective, it was borne out of necessity. No other literature has established the parallels between:

neoliberal epochs → New Public Management → and mainstreaming DRR



The idea of mainstreaming complex policies such as gender or DRR arose from the need for bureaucracies and organisations to better manage wicked policies, by encouraging a cross-governmental approach to tackling problems. When mainstreaming became popularized in the 1990s, governments had been subjected to neoliberal public sector reforms the previous decade, which fragmented and diminished their ability to tackle complex policy problem (a key tenet of neoliberalism is the reduction in the size of government bureaucracies and outsourcing of key services). The irony is that mainstreaming is a neoliberal policy intended to fix the first wave of neoliberal public management policies. Of concern is that the disaster vulnerability literature implicates neoliberalism as a driver of disaster risk.

The second research objective still requires further discussion. Chapters 4, 6, 7, 8 presented data from various facets of the Government of Nepal including the central, district/local, and the political parties. Throughout the background and empirical chapters, the rhetoric of policy change was unpacked from the reality of achieving that policy change within a Government of Nepal context. This has unravelled the policy jargon and left many loose ends. To tidy up those loose ends and to come to a comprehensive explanation of what was occurring, the following discussion returns to the theories and frameworks discussed in Chapter 3.

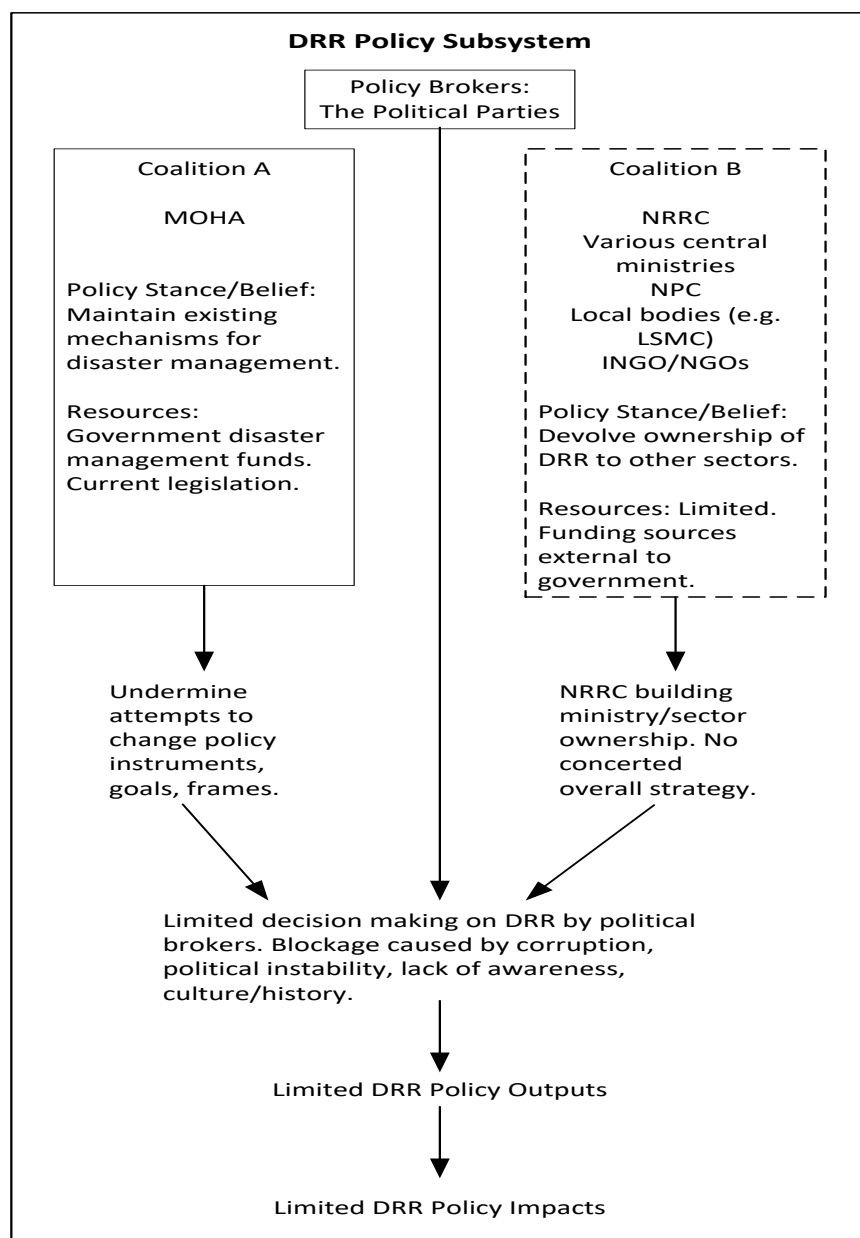
Since the literature has very little to say about policy mainstreaming, the policy paradigm and policy integration literatures are used to frame the discussion of mainstreaming DRR in Nepal. The Advocacy Coalition Framework, Hall's theory of social learning and paradigm policy change, and Candel and Biesbroek's frameworks are each discussed and critiqued in relation to the case-study evidence from Nepal. Collectively, each theory and framework adds to an explanation of what was occurring in Nepal.

### **9.1.1 Advocacy Coalition**

Now that central (Chapter 6), district/local (Chapter 7), and the political parties (Chapter 8) have been discussed, there is a fuller picture of the actors involved in the disaster policy subsystem. To that end, the ACF can now be employed to visually illustrate the existing disaster policy subsystem. The ACF also serves as a conceptual tool to analyse the process of policy change (i.e. competing policy

advocacy coalitions vying for dominance) that was found in Nepal. Figure 8-1 is an expanded view of the disaster policy subsystem in Nepal<sup>39</sup>. For use in Nepal, the ACF had to be slightly modified as some of its contentions did not reflect the reality of the policy environment in Nepal. These modifications are discussed following Figure 9-1.

*Figure 9-1. ACF Disaster Policy Subsystem in Nepal*



(source: adapted from Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993)

<sup>39</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3: a subsystem is a conceptual term to denote the space where policy coalitions compete for dominance; a coalition is a conceptual term to delineate groups that share similar policy beliefs.

#### **9.1.1.1 *The Advocacy Coalitions***

Based on the results of the fieldwork, there are two coalitions within the disaster policy subsystem: coalition A that consists of the Ministry of Home Affairs that stands for the traditional disaster response approach to policy, and coalition B that consists of various actors such as the NRRC, MOFALD, and the LSMC that have come to understand the value of integrating DRR throughout development decisions. Coalition B is denoted by a dashed line rather than a solid one because it has not yet fully coalesced. Coalition B is made up of disparate actors who are mostly in the early stages of integrating DRR into their sector work streams. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, at both the central and district/local levels there was evidence of policy entrepreneurs (e.g. the Joint Secretary in the NPC) and/or divisions (e.g. as found in MOFALD, Ministry of Agricultural Development), and a local government (e.g. LSMC) who were showing signs of advocating and integrating DRR into work processes. Apart from the NRRC, coalition B had no mechanisms to unite coalition members to work in a concerted manner to contest MOHA's policy dominance. As such, coalition B remains largely theoretical at the moment rather than a fully actualized coalition that is able to advocate for integrating DRR throughout sectors.

The development of coalition B was mainly being mobilized through the NRRC Flagship programme and the donor funding attached to it. The ACF serves as an explanatory tool of what the NRRC was accomplishing at a conceptual level in relation to policy change. The NRRC was building more than just capacity within key central ministries. It was developing a coalition of ministries with a shared understanding of DRR being a cross-sector responsibility. Key government ministries—such as the Ministries of Education, Health and Population and MOFALD—were showing signs that they are gaining ownership of the DRR policy agenda. Unquestionably, a primary impetus for ministries to incorporate DRR was the result of increased donor funding. Yet the offshoot of more funding was that a government advocacy coalition was being formed around the issue of DRR. This is important because MOHA is a very powerful ministry. Its grip on the disaster policy agenda is strengthened through the global (and Nepali) culture of disaster management being the purview of first response organisations, the existing disaster management legislation, and MOHA being the recipient of the bulk of funding for disaster management. To counter MOHA's dominance in the disaster policy subsystem, other government

sectors need to actively push for policy change. The impetus needs to come internally through the government (with the importance of the role political parties play not being discounted), indicating a political rather than technocratic change agenda.

One of the premises of the ACF noted in Chapter 3, is that policy subsystems have an inter-governmental dimension. This is why the LSMC is included as part of coalition B<sup>40</sup>. In theory, as more ministries and local bodies integrate DRR into their work streams, the harder it will be for MOHA to undermine DRR policy change. However, the reality in Nepal is that the lack of district and local elections has marginalized local bodies, meaning LSMC's influence within the policy subsystem is minimal.

#### **9.1.1.2 *The Policy Brokers***

As discussed in Chapter 8, political parties are the policy brokers in Nepal. The original conception of the ACF likely did not conceive policy brokers to exhibit the lawless behaviours that Nepal's political parties exhibit. Nonetheless, the political parties at the national and local levels are the ones who have control over development agendas. The ACF then gives them a central role in the policy change process. Based on party member responses in Chapter 8, the political party respondents seem receptive to DRR. They understood DRR in the context of their local environment. Through awareness raising, the parties can broker DRR policy change as was evidenced by the political National Campaign for Disaster Risk Reduction.

#### **9.1.1.3 *Limitations of the ACF***

In Chapter 3 it was noted that the ACF discussed coalitions as holding shared policy beliefs. The authors of the ACF equate policy views with a belief system in order to denote how difficult it is to achieve policy change, especially if the policy is aligned with one's deep core beliefs. From the fieldwork, it is difficult to qualify MOHA's resistance to change as the result of a deeply held policy belief, especially when the rhetoric of change did not match the reality. While it is impossible to truly know MOHA's institutional policy belief concerning DRR, one

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<sup>40</sup> It should be noted, that in the course of researching DRR in Nepal, there were reports of other local bodies taking a proactive role in implementing building codes.

plausible explanation is that control of the disaster response policy paradigm equates to power over disaster related issues and a monopoly over donor funding. In the ACF, funding is considered as a secondary aspect to policy beliefs. However, based on the Nepal case-study, a secondary aspect like funding holds far greater weight than policy beliefs. Considering the above, Figure 9-1 was amended to read 'policy stance/belief' (in the original ACF it only refers to policy belief) to better reflect the Nepal policy environment. However, members of the emerging coalition B were more likely to discuss DRR policy in a way that suggested DRR aligned with their policy beliefs. This was particularly evident in the responses from the first respondent from the NPC, some members of the LSMC, and the engineers who discussed their work in the Department of Education. These respondents conveyed a shared concern and a belief in public safety.

Having just argued that the ACF reliance on policy beliefs is overstated in a Nepal context, this also refutes the ACFs contention on the role of external shocks in prompting policy change. A contention of the ACF is that it takes a large external shock to the policy subsystem to alter policy beliefs. This research occurred in the midst of the 2015 earthquake, an event that presumably qualifies as an external shock that could change disaster policy. Seeing as coalition B was still in the developing stages, the earthquake could have acted as a galvanizing force in unifying the coalition. Or the earthquake could have shifted the dominant policy beliefs of coalition A (MOHA). Neither of these scenarios occurred. Instead, the earthquake seemed to further entrench MOHA's dominance and reinforced the disaster response paradigm. It is difficult to explain why the earthquake was not enough of an external shock to promote change and opens an avenue for further studies on disaster events and policy change.

### **9.1.2 Paradigm Policy Change**

Having used the ACF to illustrate the existing disaster policy subsystem in Nepal, it is now time to dig deeper into the theories of paradigm policy change discussed in Chapter 3 to formulate some explanation as to why and how change was occurring. Hall (1993) and others such as Olson (2000) theorized on the complexity and difficulty of changing policy paradigms. Hall (1993) in

particular proves prescient when reviewed against the case-study evidence from Nepal. Conceptualizing the current disaster management policy environment as a policy paradigm resistant to change, is useful not only for framing the analysis but also for understanding why MOHA used the rhetoric of mainstreaming to stymie efforts to change disaster policy.

To briefly recap, Hall defined a policy paradigm as “a framework of ideas and standards that specifies not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing” (Hall 1999: 279). He further explains, a dominant policy paradigm becomes insulated from external change “... because so much of it is taken for granted and unamenable to scrutiny as a whole” (ibid: 279). This is precisely what was found in Nepal regarding the disaster response paradigm. The Nepal disaster response paradigm is sustained by the out-dated NCR Act, and was being insulated by MOHA’s actions to maintain its control as the lead disaster institution. Institutionally, all power and control for disaster related issues rests with MOHA, and culturally there is general acquiescence amongst bureaucrats that it is MOHA’s role to respond to disasters using its paramilitary police force. In Nepal, the disaster response paradigm is a formable paradigm, that until the NRRC began its efforts to build capacity and awareness in other ministry sectors, has had very little internal government scrutiny.

Hall classified orders of policy change by first, second, and third order—with first order change being minimal change and third order being a “wholesale” change in policy. In Chapter 3, it was argued that change on the level of third order ought to be the central aim of mainstreaming DRR. Change is a big component of mainstreaming DRR throughout government sectors, as it is not only about changing the disaster management policy paradigm, it is also about changing development sector policies and processes.

By thinking of mainstreaming DRR as a third order change process, it helps to explain the tension that existed between a) the rhetoric of what MOHA says it wants to do by mainstreaming DRR, and b) the reality of what it actually has done. When the MOHA respondent spoke about all government sectors incorporating DRR into their work streams, to the extent that traditional DM planning would become obsolete (see Chapter 6), it was saying MOHA supported third order policy change to occur. Instead, as evidenced by the

existing state of legislative and policy reforms, the actual output amounted to a limited first order change. The goals and instruments related to DM have remained the same, the only action that suggests change is the endorsement of the non-legally binding National Strategy in 2009 (and it is important to note that the impetus for the National Strategy was driven by actors external to the government (e.g. the HFA, NSET-Nepal, the UN and donor communities)). The disconnect between MOHA's third order change with its minimal efforts at first order change is another way of framing the rhetoric and reality argument.

Hall and other policy scholars agree that third order change is difficult to achieve because the established dominant policy actors subvert the change agenda by forcing policy discourse into a particular frame. This was clearly evident in Nepal and best seen through MOHA's continual framing of disaster as a response rather than development agenda with ministry focal point participants (discussed in Chapter 6). It was also evidenced by MOHA reworking the draft DRM legislation to maintain control of the proposed National Disaster Management Authority.

Policy paradigm change was also being stymied through the GON non-decision making and control over the disaster policy agenda. In Chapter 3 Olson (2000) noted three key factors in governments not engaging in disaster mitigation issues: issue suppression, non-decision making, and agenda control. While little evidence was found to suggest that MOHA had suppressed information, non-decision making and agenda control stand out from the empirical and observational evidence. The delay in passing adequate DRM legislation is a form of non-decision making. It is in this negative space of doing nothing where MOHA and the policy brokers in the Constituent Assembly appeared to exist despite the rhetoric of the GON taking strategic action. It is in this realm too that transparency becomes skewed and corruption festers.

Agenda control is another tactic used by MOHA to prevent policy change. There is ample evidence from the pre-earthquake fieldwork that MOHA was working subversively to maintain control over the disaster agenda. Because of MOHA's response role, the 2015 earthquake further strengthened MOHA's grip on the disaster policy agenda. Instead of changing the policy paradigm, the earthquake reinforced the central role that MOHA plays in disaster policy. This weakened the momentum for DRR policy change that was found in the pre-earthquake fieldwork.

Hall states that an accumulation of “abnormalities, experimentation with new forms of policy, and policy failures precipitate a shift in the locus of authority over policy...” (Hall 1993: 280). As noted, the post-earthquake fieldwork did not reveal any indications that the 2015 earthquakes shifted government perceptions of DRR. Despite the destruction and lives lost, there was no redoubling of efforts to implement DRR. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Government became preoccupied with passing the Constitution and later during the final fieldtrip, the government was preoccupied with rebuilding the earthquake damaged areas. The public criticisms that existed were around the poor government earthquake response and the slow pace of recovery. The disaster response status quo was being maintained.

Nonetheless, third order policy change can and does occur. Hall and others argue that third order change typically requires the involvement from broader “social and political forces” (Rayner 2014: 68) than just the policy makers within the policy domain. In Nepal, external actors to the government were indeed driving the policy change agenda. Specifically, they had coalesced as the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium. The evidence from the fieldwork indicates that wide-spread government awareness and buy-in of the DRR agenda was missing. As seen in the ACF discussion above, an advocacy coalition was being formed within the GON through the work of the NRRC. This appeared to be addressing the lack of widespread government acceptance of DRR and may possibly lead to the discrediting of the disaster management paradigm. The focus of this research was only on the government actors within the advocacy coalition and thus it is unknown how public opinion and the involvement of other actors such as researchers and journalists may contribute to achieving third order change. It is the collective discrediting from a broad range of actors that Hall (1993) argues is an important component of policy paradigm change.

### **9.1.3 The Role of Social Learning and Ideas in Changing Nepal's Disaster Policy Paradigm**

The concept of social learning was also valuable for explaining what was occurring in Nepal. It is evident from the central, district/local, and political party findings that individuals within the bureaucracy matter and are a key factor in changing the policy dynamic in Nepal. Candel and Biesbroek state:



“Agency-centred mechanisms help to explain why and how dimensions of integration change toward enhanced or weakened policy integration. The most notable agency-centred mechanisms of policy integration identified so far include well known mechanisms of social learning...coalition building... and policy entrepreneurship” (Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 218).

As outlined throughout this research, those that do push and influence policy change face great obstacles (i.e. corruption, inter-ministry competition, hierarchical centralisation) and must work with political deftness and stamina. Even in the absence of legislation to compel ministry work on DRR, central level ministries showed indications that DRR related work was becoming a part of their work streams (as evidenced by MOFALD, MOAD, MOHP, and NPC). In Hall’s parlance, government sectors were attempting “to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information” (Hall 1993: 278) in spite of MOHA’s attempts to subvert policy change. The new information on DRR and the corresponding incorporation of it into ministry and local level work streams is indicative of social learning. Respondents who had greater awareness and understanding of DRR were less content to assign MOHA full responsibility for disaster related policy (e.g. Chapter 6.4.1). Pragmatically, social learning cannot be 100% attributed to the change in ministry behaviours. While a growing recognition and awareness of sector responsibilities concerning DRR is a factor, so too is the additional donor funding that are attached to these initiatives. However, the interest and enthusiasm that some of respondents showed for the issue of DRR is an encouraging sign of social learning.

As further evidenced by the findings from the LSMC (Chapter 7), social learning had shaped bureaucrat ideas around disaster management and disaster risk reduction in a way that had a legacy. Bureaucrats in the LSMC were some of the first to learn about earthquake resilient construction and building codes. They saw themselves as policy innovators. Of all the field site locations in Nepal, the LSMC had the most developed disaster management institutionalisation and the best cross-sector understanding of disaster risks. The building code was adopted just before local level elections were abolished. There was a sense of nostalgia from the respondents that indicated the BCI policy innovation meant more than just risk reduction, but also represented a time when bureaucrats had some autonomy to formulate policy and take risks. It is important to note that LSMC did not have municipal by-law related to DRM or an overall DRM policy

document. This suggests that its institutional environment relied on senior bureaucrat understanding and support of DRR. DRR in the LSMC existed without a centralised legal policy document being in place.

Also in political parties (Chapter 7), it is easy to see how social learning is key to transforming DRR policy. Regardless of bureaucratic efforts, the political parties remain significant barriers to change. They hold the key to district and local level development approaches. To date there have been no campaigns to raise awareness of DRR within the parties themselves. Nonetheless, it was clear that the district respondents understood the link between development and disaster. The fact that elements of DRR existed in the election manifestos is evidence that DRR is a politically salient topic. At the central level, the example of the National Council for Disaster Risk Reduction campaigning for stronger DRM legislation (see Chapter 8) is evidence of the impact the political parties can have in Nepal.

Social learning and ideational approaches to policy change are useful approaches for understanding the Nepal policy context. Instead of looking at mainstreaming DRR in Nepal as a technical exercise requiring top down prescriptive policy and legislative tools (which in any case did not exist), social learning provided a much richer understanding of what was occurring inside the bureaucracy and how individual bureaucrats were contributing to the process. The best two examples come from MOFALD (lead of Flagship 4) and LSMC. Without existing national legislation, DRR activity—albeit somewhat limited—was occurring. It is hard to see that legislation would improve the work that was being done in either body. Flagship 5 is mandated to strengthen DRM policy and legislation. However, it was hard to find any discernible outcomes from these efforts, whereas the more substantive evidence of change was found in work that involved raising DRR's profile within sectors that had not traditionally played a role in disaster management (in particular, Flagship 1 and Flagship 4). This is an indication that too much emphasis is given in international frameworks for establishing the central legal and policy frameworks for DRR. In a nation-state such as Nepal, where overall governance processes are weak, implementation is best served through awareness raising, education, and funding in targeted sectors. In other words, through the process of social learning.

Most importantly, an ideational approach to policy change in Nepal appropriately refocuses attention on individuals within the government. It is a recognition that the staff within the Government of Nepal are central to achieving policy success. This recognition of the importance of government staff differs from years of development approaches by INGOs/NGOs that have bypassed the government due to political instability and in response to the neoliberal “roll back” of the state discussed in Chapter 2. Bureaucrats, especially those at the district and local levels, were aware of the challenges and problems that exist throughout the Government of Nepal. In the case of LSMC, they were motivated by the thought that they were improving the municipality where they lived and stimulated by the recognition that they had at one time been innovative policy pioneers. It is unfair to judge the bureaucracy with sweeping generalisations. While the institutions may be weak, the individuals within it are diverse and key to engendering substantive change.

#### **9.1.4 Reality of Policy Integration/Mainstreaming in Nepal**

Next, the following section definitively puts the issue of whether mainstreaming DRR is mere rhetoric to rest. Candel and Biesbroek (discussed in Chapter 3) provide the conceptual framework used to assess the level of policy integration found in Nepal. The authors attempted to create a framework for policy integration that captures the “dynamic process that entails various elements that do not necessarily move in a concerted manner but may develop at different paces or in opposite directions” (Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 211). The framework draws on existing policy change literature to incorporate four primary dimensions of policy integration: policy frame, subsystem involvement, policy goals, and policy instruments. Since mainstreaming DRR was a part of the MOHA led central government rhetoric, the central government data is objectively assessed against the criteria set out by Candel and Biesbroek for each dimension.

The framework is applied to assess the DRR policy frame (Table 9-1) in Nepal. Candel and Biesbroek conceptualize policy frame as meaning the extent that a policy issue has been identified/framed as a cross-cutting problem. For the most part, the respondents at all levels of government recognised that development and disaster risk were linked. As a consequence, they understood that different sectors had a role to play in minimizing disaster risk outcomes. However, this

was not a universal understanding and it was strongly dependent on the DRR awareness level of the respondent. Although most of the central level respondents were the DM/DRR focal points for their ministry, DRR was still considered by several respondents to be the policy domain of MOHA. Despite the rhetoric of DRR being a cross-sector policy problem, there was no strong push for integration. It is important to highlight that there are other examples from within the GON that had framed policy issues as a cross-sector issue. As found with climate change, the government had framed the issue as a cross-sector policy problem and substantiated it by creating an inter-ministry budget code. This suggests that the reason DRR is not being framed as a cross-sector policy problem is that it is accorded low priority within the GON.

*Table 9-1. DRR Policy Framing in Nepal.*

Policy Frame				
	<div> <div>Low integration</div> <div>←————→</div> <div>High integration</div> </div>			
	<b>X</b>			
Policy Frame	<p>The problem is defined in narrow terms within the governance system; the cross cutting nature of the problem is not recognized and the problem is considered to fall within the boundaries of the specific subsystem. Efforts of other subsystems are not understood to be part of the governance of the problem. There is no push for integration.</p>	<p>There is awareness that the policy outputs of different subsystems shape policy outcomes as well as an emerging notion of externalities and do-no-harm. The problem is still predominately perceived of as falling within the boundaries of a particular subsystem. There is no strong push for integration</p>	<p>As a result of increasing awareness of the cross-cutting nature of the problem, an understanding that the governance of the problem should not be restricted to a single domain has emerged as well as associated notions of coordination and coherence.</p>	<p>General recognition that the problem is and should not solely be governed by subsystems, but by the governance system as a whole. Subsystems are desired to work according to a shared, 'holistic' approach, which is particularly recognized within procedural instruments that span subsystems (see Policy Instruments)</p>

(source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 219)

The next dimension of policy integration involves the level of subsystem involvement (Table 9-2). Nepal was on the lower end of subsystem involvement but showed some signs of progress. At the central level, a few ministry respondents were beginning to show indications that they recognized the failure of a response focused approach to disaster management and were beginning to incorporate DRR activities within their own sectors. However, the density of interactions to facilitate this comprised of mainly infrequent and informal exchanges of information with MOHA. As discussed in Chapter 6, MOHA was found to be using these interactions to undermine the process of change by reinforcing disaster response management rather than DRR. Assuming this roadblock is removed, perhaps the process of policy integration could be expedited. The other avenue of involvement was through the NRRC Flagship Programme. It is unknown the level of involvement and density of interactions of these meetings. However, the lead ministries (Education, Health, Irrigation, MOFALD) of the flagships showed greater ownership and awareness of DRR in the interviews. It is safe to assume that their involvement in DRR was having an impact on framing DRR as a policy problem that to be addressed by their Ministries.

Table 9-2. DRR Subsystem Involvement in Nepal

Subsystem Involvement				
	Low integration ←————→ High integration			
	<b>X</b>			
Subsystem Involvement	One dominant subsystem, which governs the issue independently. Formally, no other subsystems are involved, although they may be in terms of substantial, non-intentional policymaking	Subsystems recognize the failure of the dominant subsystem to manage the problem and externalities, which results in the emergence of concerns about the problem in one or more additional subsystems	Awareness of the problem's cross-cutting nature spreads across subsystems, as a result of which two or more subsystems have formal responsibility for dealing with the problem.	All possibly relevant subsystems have developed ideas about their role in the governance of the problem. The number of subsystems that are formally involved is equal to or higher than at previous manifestations, but complemented with a less engaged set of alternative subsystems
	<b>X</b>			
Density of Interactions	No interactions	Infrequent informal exchange with dominant subsystem	More regular and formal exchange of information and coordination, possibly through coordinative instruments at system-level	High level of interaction between formally involved subsystems, that maintain infrequent interactions with a less engaged set of subsystems.

(source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 221)

The next dimension, policy goals, looks at the extent that mainstreaming DRR was embedded throughout the GON and the level of coherence that exists between the sectors to solve the problem of DRR (Table 9-3). What constitutes a *policy goal* is the explicit incorporation of the problem (i.e. DRR) into sector policy and strategy. Here there were a few indications of progress, for example:

- MOFALD incorporated DRR considerations into both its Minimum Standards and into the LDO and EO performance contracts;
- MOAD had recently established a full-time position to integrate DRR into central ministry planning;
- The NPC had incorporated DRR into its national development plans.

The second indicator looks at policy coherence. Nepal scored very low. There was no policy coherence between the ministries as a result of there being no overarching and clearly articulated government strategy for DRR integration.

*Table 9-3. DRR Policy Goals in Nepal.*

Policy Goals				
	<div> <div>Low integration</div> <div>←————→</div> <div>High integration</div> </div>			
	<b>X</b>			
Range of policies in which problem is embedded	Concerns only embedded within the goals of a dominant subsystem	Concerns adopted in policy goals of one or more additional subsystems	Possible further diversification across policy goals of additional subsystems	Concerns embedded within all potentially relevant policy goals
	<b>X</b>			
Policy coherence	Very low or no coherence. Occurs when cross-cutting nature is not recognized, or when subsystems are highly autonomous in setting (sectoral) goals	Because of the rising awareness of externalities and mutual concerns subsystems may address these to some extent in their goals	Coordinated sectoral goals, which are judged in the light of coherence. Subsystems attempt to develop synergies.	Shared policy goals embedded within an overarching strategy

(source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 222).

Finally, the degree to which policy instruments have been developed to guide cross-sector integration in Nepal is assessed (Table 9-4). Nepal ranks very low in this dimension. Examples of possible policy instruments could be funding mechanisms, regulations, tax exemptions, or stakeholder consultations. Apart from its inclusion in the National Strategy and in the NPC development plans, no central level policy instruments exist in Nepal to foster cross-sector DRR policy integration. As seen across the central level and in the LSMC, the work that was occurring was occurring without guiding legislation or policy. It is important to

note that DRR policy instruments were proposed. For example, there was talk of DRR inclusion in the revised education legislation and the DRM act was still pending.

*Table 9-4. DRR Policy Instruments in Nepal.*

Policy Instruments				
	Low integration ←————→ High integration			
	<b>X</b>			
Range of subsystems' policies that contain policy instruments	Problem only addressed by the substantive and/or procedural instruments of a dominant subsystem	As a result of increased awareness of externalities one or more additional subsystems (partially) adapt their instruments to mitigate negative effects	Possible further diversification of instruments addressing the problem across subsystems	Instruments embedded within all potentially relevant subsystems and associated policies
	<b>X</b>			
Procedural instruments at system-level	No relevant procedural instruments at system-level	Some procedural information sharing instruments at system-level	Increasing number of system-level procedural instruments that facilitate subsystems to jointly address the problem	Broad range of procedural instruments at system-level, including boundary-spanning structures that coordinate, steer and monitor subsystems' efforts
	<b>X</b>			
Consistency	No consistency. Sets of instruments are purely sectoral and result from processes of policy layering.	Subsystem consider externalities of sectoral instrument mixes in light of internal and inter-sectoral consistency	Subsystems seek to jointly address the problem by adjusting and attuning their instruments. Consistency becomes an explicit aim	Full reconsideration of subsystem instrument mixes, resulting in a comprehensive, cross-subsystem instrument mix that is designed to meet a set of coherent goals.

(source: Candel and Biesbroek 2016: 224)



A useful theoretical principle noted by Candel and Biesbroek is that the policy integration process does not move in a concerted manner. This was true in the Nepal case-study. Traditionally, mainstreaming DRR (or policy integration) has been modelled as a top down policy process that assumed integration occurring uniformly throughout all sectors (e.g. Lafferty and Hovden discussed in Chapter 2). The Nepal case study illustrates that policy integration is best understood as a patchwork of progress that is driven as bureaucrats and politicians learn about DRR policy and then endorse it by internalising it into their work streams. It is impossible for social learning to occur evenly across a bureaucracy. However, this patchwork approach is not captured through the above frameworks that Candel and Biesbroek suggest.

#### **9.1.4.1 *Limitations of Processual Framework***

While Candel and Biesbroek set out to create a dynamic framework and to highlight the process of policy integration, when the empirical findings from Chapters 6-8 are considered the framework only presents a very basic, static, and generalized overview of DRR integration throughout the GON. While it answers *what* the state of DRR integration is in Nepal, it does not offer any explanation of *why* it was not progressing. The framework makes a useful contribution by capturing Nepal's ineffective approach to mainstreaming DRR, but its application does not go much further than this.

What would make the framework more effective, especially for a Nepali governance context, is if it also modelled the historical, institutional and political dynamics that are part of the process of policy integration and that may present significant barriers to the integration process. Fortunately, these barriers were discussed in Chapter 4. The authors of the framework do touch on some of these aspects when they discuss policy disintegration as a theoretical principal. Some examples given by Candel and Biesbroek as to why disintegration may occur include collaboration fatigue, changes of government, political actors replacing existing paradigms, etc. (Candel and Biesbroek 2016). The Nepal context illustrates that these processes of disintegration are as much of a part of the process as policy framing, goals, instruments, and subsystem involvement.

There is nothing theoretical about Nepal's systemic corruption and MOHA's agenda control.

Despite the limitations with the above processual frameworks, it is interesting to note that they do show some indications of progress (i.e. policy frame and subsystem involvement). What was happening in Nepal to stimulate these changes? While the mainstreaming DRR agenda as promoted by MOHA was superficial at best, there were indications that the roots of policy change were starting to take hold. Evidence from the Nepal case-study shows the main driver of this was the NRRC Flagship approach in building sector awareness and buy-in of incorporating (or mainstreaming) DRR into sectors.

#### **9.1.5 Reflections on the use Policy Change Theories and Frameworks**

On the whole, the theories and frameworks discussed above proved useful for helping to explain the tensions that exist between the established disaster response policy paradigm and the difficulty in changing the policy paradigm to DRR. In the absence of legislation and policy to compel change, the idea of social learning pinpoints the essentialness of bureaucrats within the GON for achieving policy change. The above literature also contributes to a critique of the traditional way mainstreaming is envisioned as policy. The top down, uniform, and technocratic approach to mainstreaming seems erroneous when confronted with the reality of the policy change literature that argues third order change is a tough and an overtly political slog. Third order change is rarely achieved and when it does often takes decades to be realized. The idea of uniformly integrating DRR policy throughout the GON is upended by the policy change literature.

### **9.2 Research Implications and Conclusion**

The following section is a reflection on the implications and overall conclusions to come from this research.

### **9.2.1 Implications for DRR Policy**

There are several significant policy implications to be derived from this research. First those specific to Nepal are discussed, and then the implications for DRR policy in general are addressed.

#### **9.2.1.1 *Nepal Mainstreaming DRR Policy Implications:***

Perhaps the most significant policy implication to follow from this research is the awareness that within the GON there is active resistance to DRR policy change. This leaves the policy community with two options: either find a way to counter this resistance or to make MOHA accountable for undermining efforts to reform the disaster policy subsystem.

- This research has illustrated how opportune it is for policy makers in Nepal to appropriate global neoliberal buzzwords and turn it into GON rhetoric to suit their purposes.
- The notion of top-down MOHA led mainstreaming should be abandoned and replaced with a 'patchwork' approach that does not seek integration as a concerted undertaking. Policy change theory rooted in social learning approaches suggest that mainstreaming DRR throughout the government should be approached on a sector by sector basis, with an emphasis on building awareness and coalition building.
- Short-term DRR integration projects need to be replaced with longer term approaches. The NRRC Flagship Programme was found to be a main driver in building a DRR advocacy coalition and its efforts ought to be continued.
- The 2015 earthquake(s) was/were not a stimulus to change the disaster response policy paradigm, at least as far as the GON was concerned.
- The political parties ought to be seen as key players for brokering policy change within the disaster policy subsystem. As found in this research political party members, especially district politicians, understood the risks facing their communities and the disaster and development nexus.
- There is a growing number of bureaucrats who are becoming champions of DRR within the GON and are working to influence change. It should also be recognized that these bureaucrats face an uphill battle because of a multitude of systemic challenges.

- As exemplified by the LSMC, local governments in Nepal can be the originators of innovative policy solutions. The implication being that local governments must be included as part of the overall DRR advocacy coalition.

### **9.2.1.2 General policy implications about mainstreaming DRR**

This research is Nepal specific and so generalisation about the policy implications of this research in another nation-states context must be made conservatively. That being said, there are some generalizable implications:

- Neoliberalism is a driver of disaster risk and global policy prescriptions (i.e. mainstreaming) that perpetuate neoliberalism by maintaining the status quo need to be reconsidered.
- It is likely that the DRR policy agenda is facing resistance in other countries from the lead ministry/institution responsible for disaster management.
- In problematic and developing government situations, the idea of mainstreaming a complex policy throughout should be critically examined.

### **9.2.2 Original Contribution to the Disaster Scholarship**

This research makes several significant contributions to scholarship. Many of these have been discussed in the preceding section 9.2.1. This discussion looks at some of the broader contributions this research has made to disaster policy scholarship.

Firstly, it contributes to the disaster vulnerability paradigm by bridging it with the policy and public administration fields. By doing so, it highlights the importance of critically challenging the policy rhetoric that is derived from neoliberal institutions. It also contributes to a better understanding of the implications of neoliberalism on DRR policy by looking at what is rhetoric and what is reality. This fills a significant gap in the disaster literature pertaining to policy and public administration.

Secondly, it furthers the conceptualization of mainstreaming by arguing that change underpins the process of mainstreaming. It does this by using

conceptual frameworks from the field of policy change. This contests the deterministic view that mainstreaming can be achieved by top-down legalistic approaches. Instead, it demonstrates the real politics that surround changing the policy paradigm from disaster management to disaster risk reduction. Keeping with the theme of change, this research also contests that idea that disasters can be 'windows of opportunity' for change. The case-study points to the 2015 earthquake not serving this function. Instead, it served to further entrench the status-quo. Why this was the case requires further study.

Thirdly, using Nepal as a case-study this research has added new insights into how global policies are adopted at the national and local levels in complex and a fragile government. Social learning was found to be key to stimulating the process of change discussed above. In an environment where legislation and policy implementation are weak, individual bureaucrats are shown to be essential for changing policy paradigms. The advocacy coalition framework was a useful conceptual tool for mapping out how change may be brought about in Nepal. Given the dominance of MOHA, a broad coalition of other ministries, politicians, and local governments is needed for substantive change to occur. In Nepal, efforts to build a coalition (mainly by the NRRC) was having a greater effect on stimulating mainstreaming DRR, than the weak effort of top-down mainstreaming DRR advocated by MOHA. This research has discredited the widely held idea of top-down mainstreaming DRR.

### **9.2.3 Future Research Avenues**

This research opens up several new avenues of inquiry. Some possible future research agendas are listed below:

- A comparative study in a different developing country using the same policy change theories and frameworks to see if the same rhetoric and reality argument applies.
- Examine how the 2015 earthquakes have influenced bureaucrat opinions about disaster policy in Nepal. This being done with an eye to further understand external shocks and third order policy change.
- Serious tensions still exist within the evolution of disaster management. Of particular interest is to examine why the discredited civil defence era

still influences modern day emergency management and how the legacy of that era is preventing the profession from modernizing.

#### **9.2.4 Limitations of Research**

There are two main research limitations. The first issue is resultant from the scope of the research project: to examine how mainstreaming was occurring throughout the GON. This demanded that fieldwork occur over a wide territory of the government and would have benefited from a larger sample size. The second was the use of interviews as the main method of data collection. Both of these limitations resulted from issues of constraint and control.

Ideally, more in-depth interviews—particularly throughout the central government level—would provide a clearer picture of how bureaucrats understood DRR and their ministry's role in policy mainstreaming. Those interviewed were mainly bureaucrats that were already associated with DRR, either as Flagship representatives or as the designated DRR focal point. As such, they were not representative of the majority of ministry employees that have no direct DRR responsibilities. Sample size is also a limiting factor in the political party discussion. Gaining access to senior level party members was the most challenging aspect of this research. However, it was possible to gain interviews with political party members and with other central level bureaucrats. The root cause of this limitation concerns the limited resources available to conduct this research. The capacity of the researcher to transcribe and conduct in-depth interviews was constrained by lack of time, finances, and capacity. The other limitation identified concerns the use of interviews as the primary method. As already noted, the issues concerning interviews were discussed in detail in section 5.4.5.

Despite these limitations, it is unlikely that a larger sample size would profoundly alter the conclusions drawn from the empirical chapters. A larger sample size would provide a fuller picture of the lack of understanding that exists around DRR, which would help illuminate the full extent of the existing DRR advocacy coalition. That being said, the findings of this research illustrate with certainty that there is little progress being made to mainstream DRR throughout the government. Finally, the use of interviews as the primary method provided both

nuanced and rich data from which the conclusions were drawn. While some of the respondents may have overstated the governments efforts to mainstreaming DRR, the overall results prove otherwise.

### **9.3 Conclusion**

This research bridged two spheres of influence: that of the supranational jurisdiction where disaster and development policies are scripted and formulated in frameworks, and that of the nation-state of Nepal, a least developed country and the intended recipient of supranational funding and policy recommendations. In concluding this work, it is important to highlight the interdependence of these two spheres- where the strength of the supranational relies on the weaknesses of the nation-state, and vice versa. Global policy is crafted and prescribed to countries in need such as Nepal. However, in this transaction is a hidden perpetuation of the status quo. Global policy is designed to maintain the neoliberal economic imperative, so prefers to couch policy in vague and often meaningless buzzwords, such as mainstreaming. MOHA, the ministry responsible for disaster management policy within the GON, enthusiastically adopts policy jargon that is unlikely to upset its own control over disaster policy. In this interplay, time and money are wasted and little is done to minimize the risk of disasters.

This research has found a serious lack of critical assessment—both in the global supranational and within the GON—surrounding DRR policy. Having thoroughly examined both the rhetoric and the reality of mainstreaming DRR in Nepal, it is apparent that both jurisdictions have a stake in undermining the reforms that are known to be necessary. As witnessed by the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, the stakes are far too high for researchers to not examine the rhetoric and reality that surrounds disaster policy.

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# Appendix One: Information and Informed Consent- Nepali

## Information Sheet



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प्रिय सहभागी

विपद् जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरणको राजनीति: महाभूकम्प २०७२ अघि र पछिको तुलनात्मक अध्ययन विषयक अनुसन्धान अध्ययनमा सहभागिताको लागि रुचि देखाउनु भएकोमा धन्यवाद। यस अनुसन्धानको पहिलो चरण अक्टोबर २०१४-अप्रिल २०१५ बीच सञ्चालन भएको थियो। तपाईंलाई यस अनुसन्धानको दोस्रो चरणमा भाग लिनुको लागि आमन्त्रित गरिन्छ जो महाभूकम्प २०७२ पश्चात्को नीतिगत अवस्थाको अध्ययन गर्ने उद्देश्य राख्दछ। यस अध्ययनको निष्कर्ष मेरो पीएचडी डक्टरेट थिसिसको आधार बन्नेछ जो अक्टोबर २०१६ मा नर्थअम्ब्रिया विश्वविद्यालयलाई पेश गरिनेछ।

यस अनुसन्धानले सार्वजनिक प्रशासनका चुनौती- बाधाहरु तथा सरकारी क्षेत्रहरु र प्रशासनिक स्तरमा प्रकोप जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरण प्राप्तिको अन्वेषण गर्ने उद्देश्य राख्दछ। सरकारी क्षेत्रहरु बीच विपद् जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरण गर्नु नेपालको विपद् जोखिम व्यवस्थापन राष्ट्रिय रणनीति २०६६ तथा सेन्ट्रल फ्रेमवर्क फोर डिजास्टर रिस्क रिडक्सन २०१५-२०३० को एक घोषित उद्देश्य हो। तथापि, विपद् जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरण एक जटिल प्रक्रिया हो र वर्तमान अवस्थामा विपद् जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरण पूर्णतया कसरी हासिल गर्ने भन्ने बुझाईको अभाव छ। यस अध्ययनले नीति मूलप्रवाहीकरणको उद्देश्य स्पष्ट पार्नुका साथसाथै विपद् जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरण प्राप्तिका बाधाहरुको जाँच गर्दछ।

यस अध्ययनको मुख्य आँकडा सङ्कलन गर्ने तरिका भनेका अर्ध-सुनियोजित अन्तर्वार्ता, सहभागी अवलोकन र दस्तावेज विश्लेषण हुन्। यदि तपाईंले अन्तर्वार्तामा सहभागी हुन रोज्नुभयो भने अन्तर्वार्ताको अवधि ३० मिनेटको हुनेछ। म तपाईं समक्ष केही मानक प्रश्नहरु राख्छु तर तपाईंलाई सान्दर्भिक लागेका जानकारीहरु छलफलमा राख्न स्वतन्त्र महसुस गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ। यस अध्ययनमा तपाईंको सहभागिता स्वैच्छिक हो र तपाईंले कुनैपनि समयमा आफ्नो संलग्नता फिर्ता लिन सक्नुहुन्छ। तपाईंको अनुमति नभएसम्म यस अध्ययनमा तपाईंको परिचय गोप्य राखिनेछ र सम्पूर्ण जानकारी र फाइलहरु पासवर्ड तथा ताला चाबीको सुरक्षामा राखिनेछ।

यो पत्र आफै साथ राख्नुहोला र अध्ययनको निष्कर्षका बारेमा बुझ्न र केही प्रश्न भएमा अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई सम्पर्क गर्न स्वतन्त्र महसुस गर्नुहोला।

अनुसन्धानकर्ताको नाम: सेरा वल्श, पीएचडी उम्मेदवार नर्थअम्ब्रिया विश्वविद्यालय  
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आफ्नो समय र अन्तर्दृष्टिको लागि धेरै धन्यवाद।

भवदीय,  
सेरा वल्श |

Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive  
Professor Andrew Wilson

Northumbria University is the trading name of the University of Northumbria at Newcastle



## Informed Consent



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अन्तर्वार्तामा दिइएको जानकारी प्रयोग गर्ने सहमति

नेपालमा विपद् जोखिम न्यूनीकरण मूलप्रवाहीकरणको राजनीति

अनुसन्धानकर्ताको नाम: सेरा वल्श, पिएचडी उम्मेदवार

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पुरा अन्तर्वार्ता ३० मिनेट भन्दा बढीको हुनु हुँदैन। यस अनुसन्धानमा संलग्न हुनाको कुनै ज्ञात जोखिमहरू छैनन्। अनुसन्धान, आफ्नो संलग्नता वा अनुसन्धान निष्कर्ष सम्बन्धी केही प्रश्नहरू छन् भने अहिले, अन्तर्वार्ताको समयमा वा भविष्यमा अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई सम्पर्क गरी सोध्न स्वतन्त्र महसुस गर्नुहोला।

तल हस्ताक्षर गरेर म स्वीकार गर्दछु कि:

१. मलाई अनुसन्धान परियोजना र मेरो योगदान प्रयोग गरिने तरिकाबारे जानकारी दिइएको छ। मैले मेरो नाम प्रयोग गर्ने अनुमति नदिएसम्म अन्तर्वार्ता प्रतिलेख कसरी कडाईका साथ गोप्य राखिनेछ भनेर मलाई बताइएको छ।
२. मेरो योगदानलाई हरबखत सुरक्षित रूपमा राखिनेछ। केवल अनुसन्धानकर्तालाई मात्र अनुसन्धान फाइलको पहुँच हुनेछ।
३. अन्तर्वार्ताको समयमा वा अन्तर्वार्ता पश्चात कुनै पनि समयमा म मेरो सहमति फिर्ता लिन सक्छु। यस अनुसन्धानमा मेरो सहभागिता स्वैच्छिक हो। सहभागिता अस्वीकार गरेमा वा कुनै पनि समयमा संलग्नता जनाइराख्न नसकेमा मलाई कुनै प्रकारको दण्ड जरिवाना हुने छैन।

कृपया कुनै एकमा चिन्ह लगाउनुहोस्:

☐ म अन्तर्वार्ताको लागि अनुमति दिन्छु जो मेरो परिचय नखुलाई डक्टरेट थिसिस (अनुसन्धान प्रकाशनहरू, रिपोर्ट र व्यापार पुस्तकहरू समावेश हुन सक्ने गरि) को उत्पादनको लागि प्रयोग गरिनेछ।

वा

☐ म अन्तर्वार्ताको लागि अनुमति दिन्छु जो मेरो परिचयका साथ डक्टरेट थिसिस (अनुसन्धान प्रकाशनहरू, रिपोर्ट र व्यापार पुस्तकहरू समावेश हुन सक्ने गरि) को उत्पादनको लागि प्रयोग गरिनेछ।

यसै साथ म मेरो योगदानको प्रतिलिपि अधिकार अनुसन्धानकर्ता सेरा वल्शलाई दिन्छु।

हस्ताक्षर \_\_\_\_\_ मिति \_\_\_\_\_ (सहभागी)  
हस्ताक्षर \_\_\_\_\_ मिति \_\_\_\_\_ (अनुसन्धानकर्ता)

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